

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1174
Land:	Afghanistan
Kilde:	Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC)
Titel:	Annual Report 2020
Udgivet:	2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	27. april 2021

Afghan Journalists
Safety Committee

Annual Report 2020



AJSC

AFGHAN JOURNALISTS SAFETY COMMITTEE

کمیته مصونیت خبرنگاران افغان
د افغان خبریالانو د خونديتوب کمیته

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
About Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC)	2
Methodology	2
Violence Against Journalists in the Year 2020	3
Targeted killings of journalists	9
Who is behind the targeted attacks on journalists and media workers?	9
Effects of Targeted Killings On the Activities of Journalists and Media	10
Why Journalists are intentionally targeted and killed?	11
Government's Failure to Investigate Journalists' Murder	12
Peace Talks and uncertainty around freedom of expression and the media	12
Freedom of Expression and Media Protection Plan	13
Conclusion	14
Recommendations	15

Executive Summary

Afghanistan has reached a historically critical juncture. Although recent rounds of peace negotiations have caused some hopes that an end to the four-decade conflict may be in sight, the surge in violence - especially the targeted killing of journalists and civil society activists - has cast serious concerns over whether peace talks will succeed and whether core values enshrined in the 2004 Constitution including freedom of expression and civil liberties will be protected even if peace talks lead to a political settlement. The dramatically increased levels of direct attacks and assassinations of journalists at the end of 2020 has created widespread panic among media outlets and journalists across Afghanistan. These attacks have had a noticeably adverse effect on impartial and objective reporting, with many journalists admitting to reconsidering both how and whether to report on certain topics for fear of reprisal - effectively amounting to the increasingly widespread practice of self-censorship. Additionally, the economic impact of Covid-19 has compounded existing financial challenges for media outlets, often frustrating their efforts to raise sufficient funds, and thereby their capacity to generate media content.

The media and civil society groups remain concerned that the delegation representing the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) in negotiations with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar lacks a coherent strategy to preserve key constitutional rights including freedom of speech and a free and independent media. The Taliban's ideological opposition to these values enhances concerns about the future of such freedoms. Further, the government's efforts in early 2020 to draft a new Media Law, which could extensively limit press freedom if enacted, and the lack of meaningful commitment to investigate the cases of murdered journalists have fueled these concerns.

In 2020, AJSC recorded threats and violence against 132 journalists and media workers, which includes killing of journalists, injuring them, physical assault, kidnapping, various forms of threats, theft, verbal, legal and administrative abuse. 2020 data shows 26% increase in violence and threats compared to 2019 in which AJSC recorded violence and threats against 105 journalists and media workers.

7 journalists and media workers were murdered—5 as a result of targeted killing and 2 as a result of improvised explosives. 18 journalists and media workers were injured whilst reporting and on duty. 10 journalists were physically assaulted, 47 threatened, 28 verbally abused and 13 journalists and media workers faced legal and administrative abuse by media managers. 7 journalists were kidnapped and 2 experienced theft while gathering content from the field. Based on the data collected by AJSC, Taliban and Daesh account for majority of violence and threats against journalists. Government officials come second.

This is the 14th report published by the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC). In this edition, the AJSC provides the latest available information on safety levels for Afghan journalists, to paint a data-driven picture of the current state of affairs for press freedom, journalist safety and rights, and the state of journalism in Afghanistan during 2020. The report seeks to address the most pressing issues faced by journalists and media. They also document violence against journalists and media workers, as well as giving thorough analysis and risk assessments for journalists, monitoring freedom of press, and media outlets' activities.

About Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC)

The AJSC is the largest body for supporting journalists and a free, independent and professional media in Afghanistan. The Committee is an independent, non-profit organization whose primary mission is to improve the safety of journalists, and to uphold the values of media freedom and freedom of expression. The AJSC is headquartered in Kabul and has representatives in 34 provinces. In addition, the organization maintains close cooperation and coordination on issues related to Press freedom with most international organizations supporting freedom of media and journalist safety in Afghanistan.

Methodology

To develop semiannual and annual reports, the AJSC collects data and registers incidents of violence and threats against journalists in accordance with internationally recognized standards. The Committee maintains specific parameters and criteria for classification and definition of media workers, journalists, violence, and threats. Based on these classification processes, incidents of violence against journalists and media workers are registered, followed, and addressed.

The AJSC registers all cases of threats and violence relevant to journalists, and the pursuit of journalism in Afghanistan. However, where cases do not meet existing criteria that exist in AJSC policies, they are compiled separately and are not included in the 'cases of violence against journalists' in semiannual and annual reports. For instance, if a journalist is threatened or killed for personal reasons, or because of family disputes, the Committee will register the case to its information bank, but since the case is not connected to reporting activity, or it did not happen whilst reporting, it will not be included in AJSC reports.

The data is compiled for AJSC's reports from 34 provinces of Afghanistan. They go through rigorous vetting schemes to ensure accuracy of threats and their relationship with the journalists' reporting activities. This is particularly important about the cases of violence against journalists and their perpetrators as data accuracy can help clarify trends in the complex information landscape of Afghanistan and help define effective policies towards tackling challenges of journalists and press freedom.

AJSC's reports are the only regular reports produced about the state of press freedom and journalist safety in Afghanistan. All organizations (national and international) can use these reports to have an improved understanding of the on the ground realities experienced by journalists and media across Afghanistan, disaggregated by province. AJSC hopes that by allowing unrestricted access to such data, organizations can then take a more informed and robust stance in advocating for defending freedom of expression and the safety of journalists in Afghanistan. In addition, the Committee maintains collaboration with international organizations by continually sharing information and statistics on violence against journalists, and attacks on press freedom.

Violence Against Journalists in the Year 2020

Although 2019 was not as deadly for Afghan journalists as the previous years, 2020 marked a stark spike in the level of violence against journalists. Of particular importance was the change in the nature of violence, which is characterized by the onset of targeted killing of journalists and media workers.

The bloody campaign of targeted killings of journalists started with the fatal attack against Yama Siawash, a former Tolo News TV presenter who had subsequently gone to work with the government. Following Yama Siawash's death in Kabul, Ilias Dae of Radio Liberty was killed in Helmand, Malala Maiwand of Enekas TV in Nangarhar, and Rahmatullah Nikzad of Reuters in Ghazni. Ilias Dae and Yama Siawash were killed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) attached to their cars. Malala Maiwand and Rahmatullah Nikzad were assassinated by gunfire. The method evident behind these killings indicate a strategic campaign of terror against journalists and media workers.

In addition to these killings, dozens of journalists were threatened in 2020 by various groups such as government officials, Taliban, Daesh and warlords. The threats increased significantly after the onset of the campaign to assassinate journalists. Due to the severity of the threats, some journalists and media workers were forced to flee their provinces, often seeking refuge in Kabul. A number of journalists have also left Afghanistan temporarily.

In 2020, AJSC recorded threats and violence against 132 journalists and media workers, which includes killing of journalists, injuring them, physical assault, kidnapping, various forms of threats, theft, verbal, legal and administrative abuse. The 2020 data shows 26% increase compared to 2019 in which AJSC recorded threats and violence against 105 journalists and media workers.

7 journalists and media workers were murdered—5 as a result of targeted killing and 2 as a result of improvised explosives, which targeted the vehicle of Khurshid TV. 18 journalists

and media workers were injured whilst reporting and on duty. 10 journalists were physically assaulted, 47 threatened, 28 verbally abused and 13 journalists and media workers faced legal and administrative abuse by media managers. 7 journalists were kidnapped and 2 experienced theft while gathering content from the field.

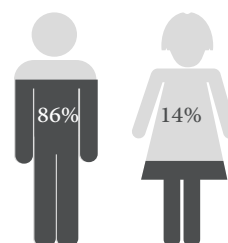
Based on the collected data and AJSC's investigations into the perpetrators of violence against journalists, Daesh and Taliban groups are responsible for 44% of violence and threats against journalists. Government officials are responsible for 31%. The nature of threats and violence exercised by the government officials is often mild while threats and violence posed by the Taliban and Daesh are usually harsh and bloody. Government officials usually exercise verbal threats and physical assault, while Daesh and the Taliban often resort to direct attacks on media and journalists.

Unknown individuals were responsible for 11 percent and warlords were responsible for 3 percent of violence and threats against journalists and media workers. Media managers/owners have inflicted legal and administrative abuse against 13 journalists and media workers which makes up 10% of the overall figure.

18 female journalists and media workers faced threats and violence which makes up 14% of the figure.

Kabul zone accounts for most cases of violence and threats (33%) and the northern zone (Balkh, Jawzjan, Faryab, Sarepul) accounts for the least 4% of violence.

In 2020, 18 female journalists and media workers faced threats and violence which makes up 14% of the figure.



Some examples of violence cases against journalists

These examples are meant to provide depiction about the nature and types of violence and intimidation against journalists.

Case 1:

In October 2020, a female journalist in Ghazni province received death threats from the Taliban militants who telephoned her expressing his resentment about her participation in a meeting with the Governor of the province. According to the journalist, the Taliban had warned her not to go to the governor without receiving permission from the Taliban.

Case 2:

In July 2020, a journalist's house in Khost province was searched by National Security Directorate (NDS) personnel without legal grounds, which requires a court order. Using a ladder on the wall, NDS personnel entered his house and searched the entire house and then left without offering any reason as to why they did the search.

Case 3:

The camera of a local media outlet was mistakenly broken by security personnel while searching. When the journalist resigned from the media he was working with, the outlet deducted three months of his salary as a compensation for the camera.

Case 4:

Two journalists were kidnapped by the Taliban on January 27, 2020, in Ghazni for covering a plane crash in Deh Yak district. The reporters were later released with the guarantee and cooperation of local elders facilitated by AJSC's representative in Ghazni province.

Case 5:

In November 2020, a local radio reporter was verbally abused and physically assaulted by Police in Daykundi province. This happened when a number of passengers were robbed by armed robbers in the Shahrستان district of Daikundi and they came to the police dormitory headquarter to complain. The people asked reporters to come and raise their voices to the authorities.

The following 5 tables/charts describes the cases in detail:

Table 1: Comparing 2020 with 2019

Type	2019	2020	Increase percentage ↑ Decrease percentage ↓
Murder	5	7	40 percent increase ↑
Injury	18	18	
Physical assault	12	10	
Threat	25	47	
Verbal abuse	33	28	
Legal and admin abuse	2	13	
Illegal arrest	3	0	
Kidnapping	7	7	
Theft	0	2	
Total	105	132	26 percent increase ↑

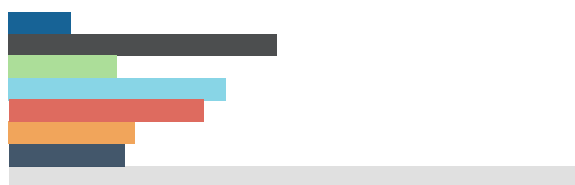
Table 2: Types of incidents

Type	2020	Percentage
Murder	7	5 %
Injury	18	14 %
Physical assault	10	7 %
Threat	47	36 %
Verbal abuse	28	21 %
Legal and admin abuse	13	10 %
Illegal arrest	0	0 %
Kidnapping	7	5 %
Theft	2	2 %
Total	132	100 %

Table 3: Incidents based on zone

Zone	Northern		Northeast		East		Southeast		Southern		Central		Western	
	5	4	20	15	9	7	17	13	16	12	12	9	9	7
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Capital Region													Total	
44													132	100
													Number	Percent

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50% 90% 100%



Percentage of Table 3 based on Graph

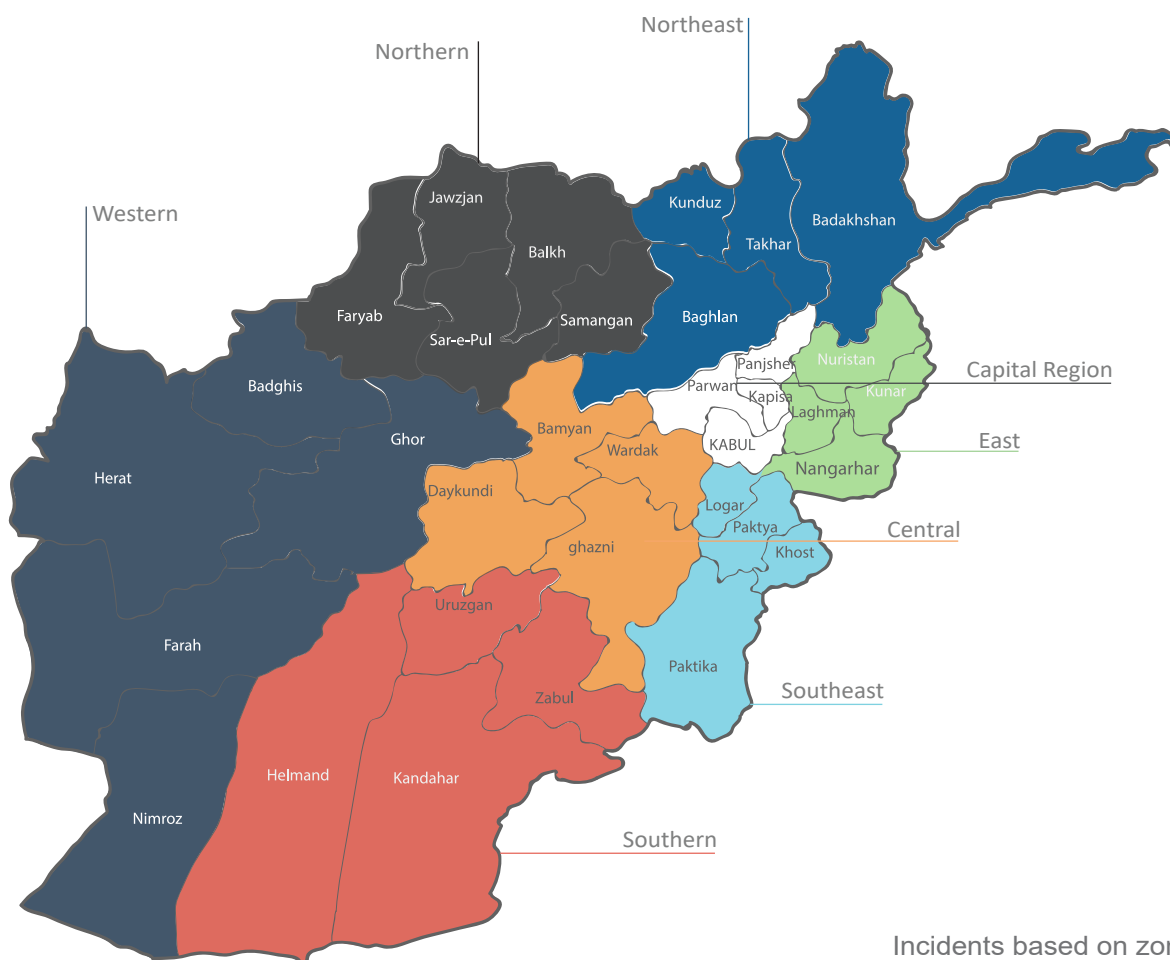
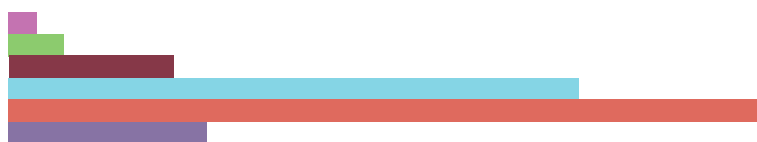


Table 4: Percentage of incidents based on perpetrators

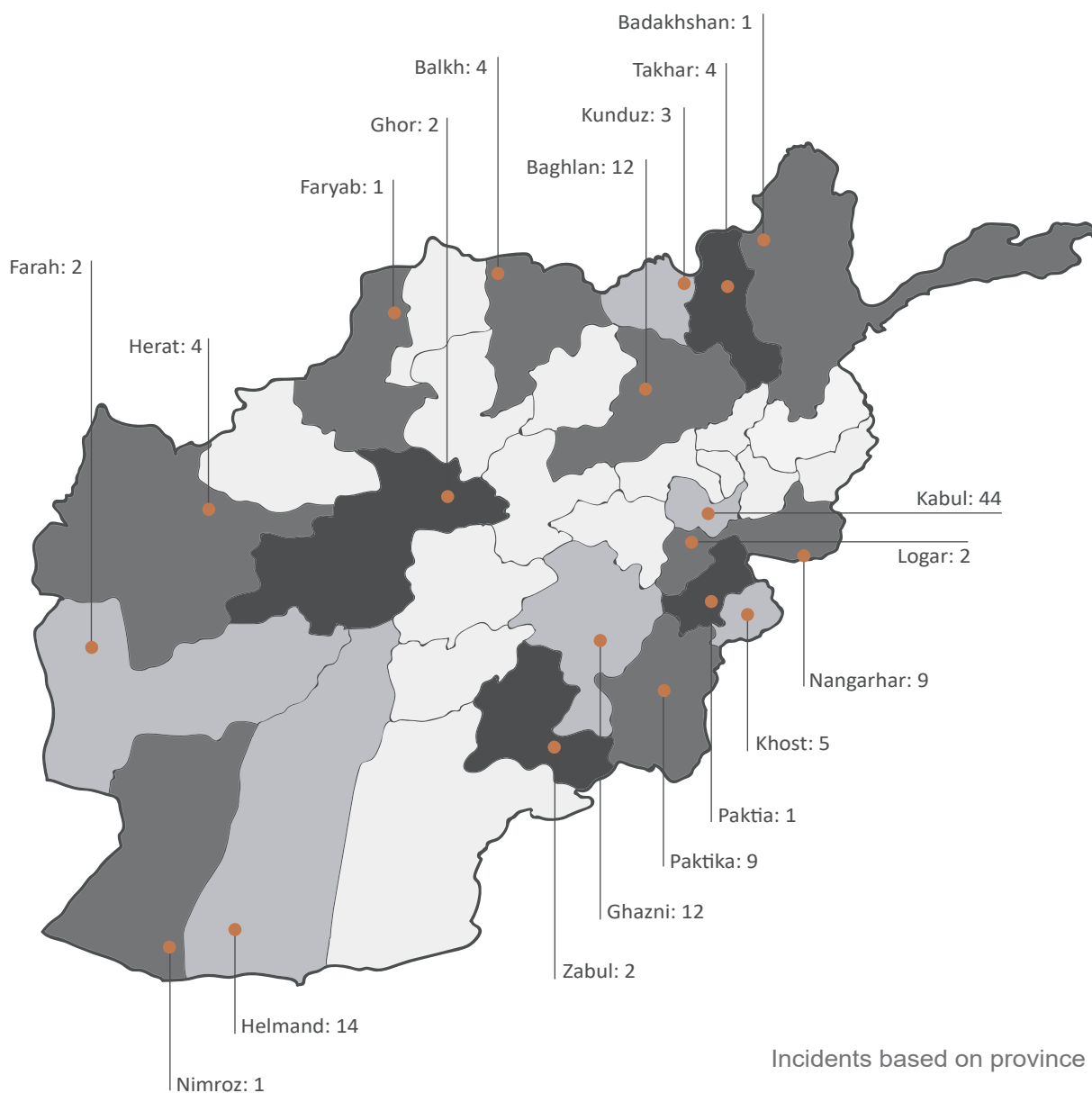
Perpetrator	Government		Daesh and Taliban		Unknown people		Warlords		Burglar		Media managers owners		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	41	31	58	44	14	11	4	3	2	2	13	10	132	100

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50% 90% 100%



Percentage of table 4 based on graph

Table 5: Incidents based on province



Incidents based on province

Targeted killings of journalists

Yama Siawash, a former Tolo News TV political programs presenter who had been absent from media activities for nearly three years and was working with the state-run bank, Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), was killed in a blast on November 08, 2020. Police attributed the blast to an IED attached to Siawash's vehicle. A few days following the incident, the government assured Siawash's family, the general public and the media that progress in the investigation into his killing was underway. However, three months later, the investigation findings have yet to be shared with the media community.

Ilias Dae, Radio Free Europe correspondent in Helmand was killed less than a week after Yama Siawash in a similar incident in Lashkar Gah city. Although the Taliban have denied responsibility for Mr. Dae's killing, a man arrested by security officials in Helmand province on December 11, 2020 in connection with Dae's murder confessed that he was requested by the Taliban to plant a magnetic mine to Mr. Dae's car. However, to date the results of the investigations have not been made available to AJSC, the media or the public.

Malala Maiwand, the first female TV presenter in Nangarhar province, was attacked by gunmen on the morning of December 10, 2020 in Jalalabad city. She was killed along with her driver. Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack in one of their online platforms. The following day, the Governor of Nangarhar announced that an individual had been arrested in connection with the murder of Malala Maiwand. Nevertheless, the government has failed to share further information with AJSC and the media community.

Rahmatullah Nikzad, a reporter for Al-Jazeera Network and head of the Ghazni Journalists' Union, was killed in an attack by unknown gunmen near his home in Ghazni on December 21, 2020. No group or individual has claimed responsibility for Mr. Nikzad's killing. The government announced it made some arrests in connection with the killing of Mr. Nikzad and released a video of a man confessing to have killed Mr. Nikzad. However, no further details have been provided to the media community subsequent to that video.

The lack of serious investigation by the government regarding the killing of journalists has raised serious concerns among the media community. The government's failure to share information with regards to any progress in the investigations could indicate that the government is either not investigating these cases, or the government apparatus, particularly, the security organizations have serious shortcomings with regards to communicating their activities and achievements. It has furthered the distance between the media and the government and exacerbated the state of impunity of crimes against journalists.

Who is behind the targeted attacks on journalists and media workers?

In the past, the Taliban and Daesh were responsible for most of the bloody attacks on journalists and media, for which they would claim responsibility. However, 2020 witnessed a marked departure from the Taliban in ceasing to publicly lay claim to attacks on journalists. Daesh has laid claim to two of the attacks, which are the strike on the Khurshid TV van in Kabul in May, and the attack on Malala Maiwand in Nangarhar in December.

The Afghan government has repeatedly blamed the Taliban for targeted attacks on journalists and civil society activists, which the Taliban has denied. On January 4, 2021, the Resolute Support (RS) Spokesperson, Col Sonny Leggett, laid blame on the Taliban for attacks on journalists and civil society activists in a tweet, urging the Taliban that for the peace process to succeed, such attacks must stop.

Although the Taliban has denied involvement since the beginning of the spike in targeted killings in early November, supporters of the group have welcomed the killings of journalists on social media, calling these killings in many cases a religious duty. Taliban supporters accuse journalists of being agents of western countries, and corrupted by western values, thereby legitimizing any violence against journalists and the media as not only being permissible but a key part of their war.

Effects of Targeted Killings On the Activities of Journalists and Media

The increase in targeted attacks on journalists have had a devastating effect on the normal activities of media and life of media workers. The attacks have disrupted content creation processes and reduced the productivity and efficiency of the media in producing news and other types of content. They have generated pervasive fear among journalists and media workers, forcing many to work from home or adopt extraordinary shifts. Meanwhile, a number of journalists have moved from insecure provinces such as Ghazni and Helmand to Kabul, diminishing the coverage of news in those provinces.

Self-censorship has widely spread. In some cases, journalists or media outlets do not go into detail, or avoid publishing stories about the destructive activities of insurgent groups. This self-censorship is more prevalent in insecure provinces. Representatives of the Taliban in some provinces have ordered media outlets to adjust their broadcasts and/or publications according to the group's instructions, and to publish/broadcast only those issues that are acceptable to the group. For instance, in Ghazni province, the Taliban has instructed the majority of the local media outlets that they would only be permitted to continue media activities if they followed their directives. Failing to do so, media outlets and journalists have been warned, would lead to attacks on journalists and media. The Taliban in Ghazni province have also coerced media outlets to fully broadcast the information they give to the media about their activities and battlefield gains. The media outlets' refusal to do so could lead to reprisal.

In addition, most media outlets in Ghazni province have been instructed by the Taliban that the hosts of entertainment programs should not be women, and that music should not be broadcasted. Media and journalists in Ghazni and other insecure provinces such as Helmand are often bullied by the constant accusation of the Taliban that the media broadcast government news with bias, meaning they give primacy to the government news without balancing news by obtaining the account of the Taliban. Although journalists have made their best attempts to balance their news, it has not turned out to be satisfactory to the Taliban.

By bullying and coercing media and journalists in the insecure regions of the country such as Ghazni and Helmand, the insurgent groups most likely want to attain control over production of content, including the type and nature of news broadcast by the media. It has also led to extensive self-censorship in these regions whereby journalists do not dare broadcast news that reveal ill activities and atrocities of the group.

Why Journalists are intentionally targeted and killed?

The targeted killings of journalists is a new tactic that is likely to be directly linked to the peace talks and future political settlement of Afghanistan. The AJSC believes that the groups attacking journalists see freedom of expression, open information space, and free media as a major obstacle requiring dismantling. At the same time, the propaganda value of killing journalists is of significant value to insurgent groups in the context of the asymmetric warfare. With the killing of each journalist, not only does the atmosphere of terror expands, but also the credibility of the government, especially the security institutions, weakens, public trust diminishes, and self-censorship becomes prevalent among journalists and media outlets. The murder of each journalist puts enormous psychological pressure on journalists, media workers, and civil society activists. AJSC believes that the killing of journalists is part of the psychological warfare of insurgent groups seeking to hurt the collective psyche of the nation in order to achieve political goals through enhancing frustration and despair.

According to some experts and journalists, targeted killings of journalists have different causes. Some believe that journalists are well-known among the people and that their murder has a profound effect on different strata of society. They are being targeted because of the professional impartiality in reporting, or because people are accustomed to the way they speak and present.

Some of the reasons and causes are as follows:

Noor Agha Sharifi, Journalist and Journalism Professor at Balkh University

Mr. Sharifi attributes the killings of journalists to the Soft War's approach of militant groups. He says that more attention has been paid to the soft war lately and that propaganda and public opinion are very important to militant groups in order to sow fear and doubt in the minds of the public, and for the public to accept psychologically that insurgent groups are a powerful force. Another reason that a journalist is targeted is that he/she is a well-known individual in society and his/her murder is widely reflected on media and social media platforms.

Mirwais Bizhan, Journalist for the Voice of America Radio

Mr. Bizhan believes journalists are the eyes and ears of the people. When informants and investigators are attacked within a democratic system, in fact, the voice of freedom of expression is silenced and the components of democracy are destroyed.

Asadullah Teimor, Member of National Journalists' Union from Takhar province

Mr. Teimor believes the death of a journalist is the gradual death of a culturally diverse and tolerant society that Afghans have always sacrificed for and aspired to have.

Similarly, the following opinions are synthesized from approximately twenty other journalists on the reasons for the murder of a journalist:

1. Public trust for a hopeful future is weakened every time the media is forced to report that more journalists have been targeted;
2. Journalists are impartial and work independently and objectively, gaining them a prestigious position in society. Insurgent forces know this well and by targeting journalists, they can hurt the spirit of the society;

3. Killing a journalist creates turmoil and engages individuals in heated discussion on public and social media platforms, which erode public morale and hope for a bright future;
4. Killing of journalists leads to self-censorship among media and journalists. The self-censorship induced by fear dissuades journalists from covering acts of atrocities committed by insurgent groups.
5. Killing journalists can be deployed strategically as it can enhance public dissatisfaction towards the government's ability to provide security;

Government's Failure to Investigate Journalists' Murder

Despite the Afghan government's claim about investigating cases of the killing of journalists, very little information has been shared by the government regarding their progress with these investigations. The government's failure to offer meaningful information about the investigation of the killing of journalists is reprehensible. Despite the fact that two months have passed since the dramatic increase in the targeted killing of journalists, security agencies have still not been able to provide sufficient and satisfactory information to the media community about those who have killed journalists, their motives and what measures security organizations have taken to prevent from further killing of journalists. The government has - to date – merely announced that several people have been arrested in connection with the murders of journalists, something which can in no way satisfy the media community in their quest for justice and answers.

Additionally, little has been done to support the media and journalism community to preemptively mitigate the risks, threats and dangers they face, in order to support them in their endeavor to maintain freedom of speech in Afghanistan. To date, the Afghan government has rarely been able to protect journalists, and even in cases where the government had prior warning (especially in the provinces), security officials did not want or were not able to take the necessary and serious measures to protect journalists. Instead they have relied on sending security alerts and notifying journalists of threats against them.

Peace Talks and uncertainty around freedom of expression and the media

Since the beginning of the peace talks, the country's media community has been concerned over the future of Afghanistan's freedom of expression, following the hard won gains of the past two decades. The Afghan government, despite its constitutional responsibility towards protecting and upholding this right, did not bow to the request of the media community to include a representative from the media community in the negotiation delegation. In the concluding days of the first round of Intra-Afghan Talks, the Taliban underlined that the preservation of a number of values, including the preservation of freedom of expression, would be done so within the framework of Islamic principles. But the question has remained stuck on what kind of Islamic principles would need to be answered.

The Afghan government's hesitation to take a robust position with regards to protecting press freedom, which is an important component of democracy, as well as the vague expression of the Taliban on press freedom, are worrying. The media community remain concerned over the future of press freedom which is one of the most significant gains of the past two decades.

Freedom of Expression and Media Protection Plan

In the light of the concerns raised above regarding the safety of journalists and freedom of expression during peace talks with the Taliban, and the lack of commitment to preserving these values, the AJSC has developed a 'Freedom of Expression and Media Protection strategy, which offers a clear roadmap on how to preserve press freedom during peace talks.

AJSC has shared the document with officials from various government institutions including Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, and several members of the negotiating team of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Mr. Abdullah expressed his support for the strategy, and considered the plan crucial for the preservation of the press freedom as the greatest value for democracy. The strategy proposes creation of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Press before the start of Intra-Afghan Peace Talks.

The AJSC has been working to establish this committee, and has already established core structures in Kabul and provinces to advocate for freedom of expression during the peace process. Media representatives and organizations supporting journalists and media and other relevant organs should have membership in the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression. It includes specific recommendations on what needs to be done in the three stages of negotiations; pre-negotiations, during negotiations and post-negotiations.

AJSC believes that the implementation of the plan and establishment of the Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression and Media will help reduce the concessions media community has to make during the peace talks.

Conclusion

The year 2020 marked the onset of new challenges to the realm of journalism and media in Afghanistan. With new waves of violence and killings of journalists, the danger of losing the hard won gains of a free media and information atmosphere has become an imminent threat, posing existential threats against freedoms of press and expression. Expansion of the propaganda war has put media and journalists under the spotlight of the warring parties, particularly the Taliban and Daesh which attach tremendous importance to the propaganda aspect of the war.

The space for independent and professional journalism has shrunk due to the growing self-censorship by the media. The majority of journalists are bearing psychological pressures, while carrying out their duties. In addition, the financial challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated difficulties for Afghanistan's media industry, and plunged a large number of media organs into the brink of collapse.

As a result of increased security threats and the COVID-19 crisis, a number of journalists have lost their jobs and a number of others have resigned.

The government has not taken meaningful action to pursue cases of the killing of journalists. It has failed to provide convincing response to the demands of the victims' families and the country's journalist community.

Meanwhile, the Afghan government's efforts to address the threats are insufficient and unsatisfactory. The situation of journalists' safety is concerning in the extreme and needs urgent attention from the government and international community. In the event of this essential area of democracy not being safeguarded by the government in the ongoing negotiations, the hard won gains of freedom of speech risk being jeopardized entirely.

Recommendations

Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) calls on the Afghan government, especially the security agencies, to take serious security measures to prevent the targeted killing of journalists. Reactive measures can in no way provide a solution to the existing crisis.

- The government should seriously pursue and investigate the murder cases of journalists and media workers, and share the results with the country's media community. The government's failure to effectively pursue the cases of journalist killings has created an atmosphere of mistrust among the media community about the government's seriousness and determination to protect journalists. This atmosphere of distrust must be eliminated by the serious work of the government.

- Media owners and managers should embrace more concrete measures for safety of their staff. The irresponsible acts of some managers towards their staff is extremely concerning. Eliminating widespread threats against journalists and preventing the killing of journalists requires close collaboration between journalists, the media, journalist support organizations, and security agencies. Such coordination is needed now more than ever.

Given the current situation in Afghanistan, the international community should not forget the greatest achievement of Afghanistan in the past two decades, which has been achieved with generous international support. The international community should work with the country's media community to preserve it. This engagement can play a significant role in halting – or at the very least reducing - the process of serial killings of journalists by putting pressure on the insurgent groups involved in targeted attacks on journalists. The international community can also put pressure on the Afghan government to take serious action to ensure the safety of journalists.

Journalism is a non-political phenomenon whose ultimate aim is serving public interest. Therefore, both sides in peace negotiations need to safeguard press freedom. The responsibility primarily lies ahead of the Afghan Government's team, which banks on the values of the republic. Afghanistan's vibrant media and press freedom is not only a major hallmark of the republic but has also played a tremendous role in Afghanistan's pursuit of nation-building and state-building process.



AFGHAN JOURNALISTS SAFETY COMMITTEE

کمیته مصونیت خبرنگاران افغان
د افغان خبريالانو د خونديتوب کمیته

All copyrights are reserved for the publisher. Any kind of copying, photocopying and electronic reproduction without the written permission of the publisher is prohibited.

Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC)

Qala-e-Fatullah, Kabul, Afghanistan