Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	**1768**
Land:	Afghanistan
Kilde:	RSF – Reporters Sans Frontières
Titel:	Five years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan: the growing arsenal of repressive measures against journalism
Udgivet:	10. august 2026
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	7. oktober 2026

ecoi.net

25 years ecoi.net

Document #2143497

RSF – Reporters Sans Frontières (Author)

Five years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan: the growing arsenal of repressive measures against journalism

Since the Taliban seized power in Kabul in August 2021, they have issued more than twenty national directives and a long list of provincial decrees aimed at dismantling press freedom. Journalism is increasingly throttled as criticism of the regime is forbidden, women face sweeping restrictions, political debate has been silenced and broadcasting images of living beings is banned. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) calls for an end to this crackdown.

A web of directives, decrees, and orders communicated orally from de facto ministries has stifled Afghanistan's media landscape. In January 2026, yet another line was crossed when the regime quietly enacted a new Code of Criminal Procedure for the courts, which was brought to light thanks to a leak. Though the code makes no direct mention of the press, it offers no protection for media professionals and does not exempt them from the code, leaving them exposed to legal threats and severe penalties, including imprisonment.

The new code provides for prison terms and flogging for insulting the leadership of the Emirate (Article 23: 20 lashes and six months in prison) or the Taliban's supreme leader (Article 19: 39 lashes and one year in prison), effectively criminalising any criticism of the authorities. It also punishes contact with opponents of the government, as Article 24 makes it mandatory to report such contact to the authorities. Vague definitions of "rebellion," "subversion," and "heresy" are paired with harsh penalties, giving the regime a powerful new legal weapon to silence journalists.

"In five years, the Taliban have methodically turned Afghanistan into a prison for information. Every new directive further shrinks the space for journalists and independent media. The ban on criticism is now written into law, formally codifying censorship. Women journalists have been all but erased, debate has been silenced, and every independent voice is prosecuted. By criminalising media professionals, the de facto authorities are seeking absolute control over the flow of information. RSF calls for the repeal of every provision that restricts press freedom. Hundreds of Afghan journalists have been forced to flee the country to escape this repression, save their lives, and continue their work, and transit and host countries alike must recognise the scale of this crackdown and the danger that deportation or forced return poses to these media professionals. These countries must guarantee their protection, including by granting them visas.

Célia Mercier
RSF South Asia Desk

2020–2026: Eleven measures tightening the Taliban's grip on journalism

19 September 2021 — The "11 Rules of Journalism," issued by the de facto Government Media and Information Center (GMIC), under the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Key restrictions:

- Content contradicting Islam may not be published.
- Media activities must not insult national figures.
- Stories that have not been verified or confirmed by officials must be handled with caution.
- Content deemed to negatively affect public opinion or morale must be avoided.
- Detailed reporting must be coordinated with the GMICs office.

25 September 2021 — The Ministry of Information and Culture bans any reference to the Taliban government by any name other than the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."

22 November 2021 — The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice issues a directive instructing journalists not to interview analysts critical of the Taliban or invite them onto televised debates.

November 2021 — A dress code is issued for women TV presenters, decreed by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in the name of "Islamic values." Under the directive, women appearing on television must cover their faces, leaving only their eyes visible.

March 2022 — The Ministry of Information and Culture bans the rebroadcasting of content from *Voice of America* (*VOA*) and *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (*RFE/RL*) — both US-funded broadcasters — citing a "failure to respect journalistic principles," according to a Taliban Ministry of Information official.

20 July 2022 — "Criticism" of political officials is declared contrary to Islamic law, according to a statement by Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, the Taliban's supreme leader.

April 2024 — The Ministry of Justice announces the repeal of the 2015 Press Law.

21 July 2024 — A new law on the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice is signed in late July by the supreme leader.

Key restrictions:

- The text bans the broadcast of any image depicting living beings — a ban that has since been enforced in more than twenty provinces.

21 September 2024 — New restrictions on broadcasters are issued by the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Key restrictions:

- Live political programming is banned.
- Media outlets may only invite guests from a Taliban-approved list of "experts."
- Criticising Taliban laws and policies on air is prohibited.

March 2025 — The Kandahar Provincial Directorate of Information and Culture issues "Essential Guidelines for Kandahar Radio Stations."

Key restrictions:

- Radio programs and reports must refer to the Taliban leader exclusively as "Amir al-Mu'minin" (Commander of the Faithful) and to the regime only as the "Islamic Emirate."
- Women's voices are strictly banned from radio broadcasts.

January 2026 — A new Code of Criminal Procedure for the courts is enacted by the supreme leader of the de facto authorities. The code is a new, permanent legal tool granting Taliban judges sweeping, unchecked powers to suppress voices critical of the regime.

ecoi.net description:

Article on the situation of press freedom 5 years after the Taliban took power

Country:
Afghanistan

Source:
RSF – Reporters Sans Frontières (Author)

Published:
10 August 2026

Original link:
https://rsf.org/en/five-years-taliban-rule-afghanistan-growing-arsenal-repressive-measures-against-journalism

Document type:
Appeal or News Release

Language:
English

Available on ecoi.net since:
14 August 2026

Document ID:
2143497

Austrian Red Cross

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien

T +43 1 589 00 583

F +43 1 589 00 589

info@ecoi.net

Contact

Imprint & Disclaimer

F.A.Q.

Data Protection Notice

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.