



Federation of Afghan Journalists in Exile

Analytical report of the Federation of Afghan Journalists in Exile

Two whole years have passed since the fall of the republican system in the country, and during this time we witnessed changes in all areas of the country's social life. People's lives were disrupted by the Taliban regime and a large number of them were forced to leave their homes and work. The return of the Taliban and the re-rule of their regime brought countless troubles to the country, the gates of schools and higher education institutions were closed to students, women stayed at home and restrictions were imposed on the activities of national and international institutions.

The activities of the media have been limited in country, the Taliban's violent actions against media workers and journalists caused many journalists to flee the country, and the reporters who remained in the country had to submit to the Taliban's whip and work according to Taliban wishes. The freedom of speech and the right to access information, which was relatively formed in the country in the last twenty years, lost its concept and meaning in the Taliban regime, because the phenomenon called freedom of speech has not breathed in the country for two years.

After 2001, the fall of the previous round of the Taliban regime, the media in the country had a remarkable and considerable growth, so that it could be mentioned as the greatest achievement of the republican government, but this achievement was short-lived and the Taliban dominated the country again. And it was completely shattered. After the formation of the interim government, then the appointment and election government had created an extraordinary foundation for the activities of the free media, and until the end of the republican system, the number of active media in the country reached 597. But after the fall of the republican system, the activities of fifty percent of these media were stopped due to unfavorable working conditions, economic, political, social, cultural challenges and the threat of the Taliban.



Federation of Afghan Journalists in Exile

With the suspension of some media outlets in the centre and provinces of the country, a large number of journalists and media workers lost their jobs and had to leave the country, and this issue had a destructive effect on the media community of the country. In the last two years, 50% of televisions, 48% of radios, 60% of news websites and 80% of online media stopped their activities.

Unfortunate conditions and restrictions imposed by the Taliban on the media caused some media in the country to impose restrictions on their work and engage in self-censorship. This issue has bad effects on journalism and media activity in the country. Self-censorship in the media has caused the Taliban to act against the media and journalists away from the eyes of the international community and countries that support freedom of expression and increase their restrictions on the media in the country.

Now the situation is such that if the journalists or any of the media employees step outside the imposed restrictions, they will face the Taliban's sharp and angry reaction. Journalists in Afghanistan are facing serious security and immunity challenges for covering current events. In the previous government, the most challenges from the Taliban were directed at journalists, as in the past 20 years, the country's media community lost 150 journalists during various incidents and attacks by the Taliban and ISIS, and twenty of them have been victims of attacks by the Taliban and ISIS in the last two years.

The issue of threats from the Taliban and the terrorist groups that support them is one of the big challenges that is currently bothering journalists and has cast a shadow on them like a dagger and has taken away their peace of mind. According to the statistics provided by the Federation of Afghan Journalists in Exile, until the fall of the republican system on August 15, 2021, there were 11,856 male and female journalists and media workers working in various media in the country. From the given number, 7746 people were working as journalists and 4110 people were working in other media departments. It should be made clear that in the mentioned figure, 2138 were female reporters and 5608 were male reporters.



Federation of Afghan Journalists in Exile

Due to the shutdown of some media outlets in the country, a large number of journalists and media workers have turned to non-professional jobs and some have taken the path of emigration and left the country. Currently, in the seventeen provinces of the country, there are no female employees in the media, in some provinces where women are limited in the media, the severity of the Taliban's actions and the restrictions imposed on them are such that women do not have the right to participate in assemblies and circles.

Journalists and female media workers are placed in separate rooms and places on special days so that they can only hear the speakers' voices through the loudspeaker and that's it. According to the obtained statistics, there are currently 2000 people working as journalists in various media in Afghanistan, of which only five percent are female journalists. Journalists have problems accessing information from sources, and sometimes government sources refuse to give them information, and this issue has made the work of journalists in the country face serious challenges.

The furious suppression of journalists such as arrest, torture, imprisonment, humiliating and insulting by the intelligence department of the Taliban continues in the country and dozens of journalists have been arrested and tortured by this department in the past two years under various pretexts. The graph of Taliban violence against journalists has intensified compared to 2021 and 2022 in the current year, and at least 14 journalists and franchise owners of a radio station are still under Taliban control, whose fate is unknown.

In April of this year, we witnessed an explosion in Balkh province in which 2 journalists died and 9 others were injured. The current situation and the sharp actions of the Taliban against journalists have raised concerns among the country's media community, and this has paved the way for media stagnation in the country. The intensification of the Taliban's deliberate destruction of journalists and media workers is increasing day by day, and this has made the work and activities of journalists weak and limited. By observing the current situation of media activity and journalism in the country, the possibility of more media being closed in the future



Federation of Afghan Journalists in Exile

is conceivable. So, out of 597 media outlets in the country, 384 media outlets are currently active and 213 media outlets are inactive.

The activities of the media are as follows:

Out of 131 registered televisions in the country, 83 are active and 48 are not.

The number of audio media is 351 radios, of which 246 are active and 105 are inactive.

The total number of print media across the country reaches 59 publications, of which 24 are active and 35 are inactive. The number of news agencies in the country reaches 56, of which 31 are active and 25 are inactive.

The difficult life of Afghan journalists in Iran!

After the fall of the republican regime, a large number of journalists have fled to Iran through legal and illegal means due to high security threats and fear of harassment and persecution by the Taliban. During the past two years, no media supporting organization visited these journalists and did not pay attention to their problems.

Because the visas of many of these journalists have expired and some of them do not have visas at all. Even though the journalists living in Iran have shared their problems with some foreign organizations supporting the media, they have not been given a positive response from any organization. Afghan journalists living in Iran are facing unemployment, economic and social challenges and the risk of deportation.

Due to the lack of legal documents, the majority of these journalists live secretly in some cities of Iran and cannot work freely due to the restrictions imposed by the police of this country to provide for their living needs, this situation makes them suffer from severe mental depression and psychologically, and this issue is not far from the possibility that some journalists and their family members are under pressure and psychological, economic and social challenges to addiction, selling body parts and suicide.



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The difficult life of Afghan journalists in Turkey!

After the change in the situation in the country on August 15, 2021, at least twenty journalists went to Turkey in search of security and job opportunities due to the complicated and difficult life situation in Afghanistan.

But these journalists not only did not achieve peace in this country, but also faced countless challenges and problems that they are still struggling in this quagmire.

Lack of residence security, unemployment, security restrictions of the Turkish police for journalists with temporary residence have created more problems in their way of life in this country, so that these journalists are even deprived of normal sightseeing in the environment and neighborhood they live in.

The security measures imposed by the Turkish police forces have prevented the Afghan journalists living in this country from doing journalistic activities, that's why they have turned to hard work to provide their livelihood. Worrying about the end of the stay period and returning to Afghanistan is one of the other important challenges that have caused these journalists to suffer mental turmoil.

Economic challenges, social problems, non-acceptance of refugees in the UNHCR office and the review of their cases are serious problems faced by journalists in Turkey.

Journalists living in Turkey while referring and submitting repeated requests to the sources and institutions supporting freedom of expression and the media have not been able to get a positive answer and a favorable result to determine their fate.