AjSO
Afghanistan Journalists Support Organization

Analysis by the Afghanistan Journalists Support Organization on the Imposition of New Restrictions on Media

The Systematic Silencing of Afghanistan's People: Eyes, Ears, and Voices Shut!



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Last week, the Afghanistan Journalists Support Organization received discouraging news indicating that Afghanistan is once again plunging into an information blackout, similar to the situation in the 1990s. Since the fall of Afghanistan in 2021, women, girls, and the media have suffered the most. The Taliban government has imposed severe censorship and restrictions on the media, gradually shutting down independent outlets and turning state media into propaganda tools.

Last week, the fear that the Taliban intended to stop national television broadcasts became a reality. They are trying to ban images of living creatures from television broadcasts. This decision began in Kandahar, a city in the south of Afghanistan, where television stations are no longer allowed to broadcast images of living creatures. A television without images is like a body without a soul, like meaningless words or eyes deprived of sight.

People and journalists are shocked by how and why these actions are taking place. First, music was banned, then female presenters were dismissed, and now images are no longer allowed. Last week, even TV cameras were banned from entering a meeting with the Minister of Higher Education.

In another concerning move, the Taliban arrested analyst and university professor Javid Momand for his media statements. Momand had previously been threatened by the Taliban.

One of the most dangerous recent decisions is the strict ban on publishing any news or reports about the murder of 260 Afghan migrants in the Kolgan region of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran. It appears that the Taliban and Iran, through a coordinated information effort, are preventing the disclosure of details about this incident. Javid Momand and other analysts have fallen victim to this, and reports indicate that the families of the victims have also been threatened into silence about the killing of their loved ones.

The current regime's fear of the media is a fear of the spread of documented information. They have cloaked this move with a religious justification, claiming that broadcasting images of living beings on television is forbidden.

AJSO believes that the Taliban intends to plunge Afghanistan into total informational darkness so that no one becomes aware of the regime’s oppression, harsh measures, or internal events. It is no longer realistic to expect the Taliban to respect freedom of speech or access to information.

In the view of this organization, two important steps must be taken:

.1International institutions that defend freedom of speech and media, as well as human rights organizations, must exert pressure on the Taliban based on international principles to ensure the fundamental rights of Afghans are not trampled, and that access to information and media freedom is recognized.

.2Afghan journalists and media in exile must use alternative methods to access information to fill the void created by the Taliban's censorship and authoritarian

behavior. This organization will intensify its efforts and will not allow Afghans to remain uninformed about events and developments related to their lives and destiny. Additionally, by fostering professional and organizational interactions, exiled journalists and activists must create opportunities to ensure that, in any crisis, the voice of Afghans and the true picture of the situation are clearly conveyed to the world.

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