

Media Weekly Review, Week 4, October 2021

This week, we have examined the situation of media and media workers in many provinces as per the reports of our zone representatives and provincial focal points throughout the country.

Nangrahar

Two journalists were beaten by individuals belonging to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) in Nengrahar province. This incident occurred on 24th of October when two journalists of Tolo News and JAAJ News Website went to Torkham boarder town covering the situation of Afghans crossing border with Pakistan. IEA personnel, after beating the two journalists, broke and threw their cameras in the river.

Although, the commissioner of Torkham Boarder Office has apologized and promised to pay the cost of their cameras but nothing more has been done than this. The provincial director of Information & Culture told the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee that they were aware of the incident and have discussed it with the relevant officials.

Balkh

During the past week, no case of violence against the media workers have been reported in Balkh and the north. The limitations toward access to information still remain in the same scale as before and journalists still do not get invited to any state events and meetings. The women media workers are all staying at home and it seems that there is no clear prospect for that to change.

Jawzjan

Only two freelance journalists remain in the entire province and the rest of the crowd has either left the province or country. However, the local state TV and three print media are still active. The buildings of Aina TV and Batoor TV are under the custody of IEA forces and the provincial staff of these two media outlets are trying to get back to their office buildings and restart their activities. These two media houses were funded by Marshal Dostum. Access to information still remains as a challenge. The provincial head of Information and Culture department of Jawzjan is the overall the decision maker about access to information issues.

Sar Pul

A few radio stations maintain about 8 hours broadcast every day and most of their staff that included few full time employees and some volunteers are staying at home as they don't receive any salary.

Faryab

Only four radio stations (Radio Tamana, Radio Momtaz, Radio Maimana and Radio Sahat) are active in Maimana. Activities of 7 other stations are stopped due to loss of income and financial constraints.

Samangan

Aibak is the smallest city among the northern provinces of the country. However, only few media outlets were active. Currently however, only Radio Haqeeqat and the local state TV are active and many journalists have lost their jobs as other media outlets have stopped their activities in the province.

Ghor

In the past days, the media workers of the local state TV in Ghor have been complaining for they have not received their salaries of the last two months. They say, they will have to stop working and look for other means of income if they are not paid soon. Also, many state and private media workers have left their jobs due to existing threats to their safety. Access to information is still limited in Ghor; women media workers are not allowed to work and there have been substantial changes in the content of media programs. One media house, Sarhad, has stopped its activities. Many media workers who have left their jobs in the media are either engaged in labor work or are jobless, suffering economic problems. Some media outlets don't have regular programs due to financial constraints. If the financial situations of media houses are not improved and media workers are not paid regularly and media workers are not sure of their safety, it is possible that many other media outlets stop their activities, and media workers quit their jobs.

Currently, no women media worker is active in Ghor due to either not being allowed or have left the province.

Farah

Music programs are banned in Farah. Most women media workers are staying at home and only two to three of them are having limited presence. If the situation continues as such, many media outlets will not be able to survive more than a few months in this province.

A few media houses were summoned to the Information and Culture Directorate of Farah for broadcasting music and were told that they cannot broadcast music. Radio Uroj was told that there even shouldn't be women voice in commercial advertisements. Only two to three women media workers are appearing in the media with irregular timeouts.

Nimrooz

In last days of the collapse of the previous government, many media workers had already left the province for safety and financial reasons. A number of them relocated to other provinces, some left to Iran and a number of them remained in Nimrooz with their jobs lost. After the collapse of government, two TV and four radio stations just restarted their activities after two months pause.

Zabul

In continuation of the Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AJSC) advocacy activities, the AJSC provincial coordinator held a meeting with the Head of Information and Culture Directorate of Zabul along with other media workers on the limitation on access to information. They asked for ease on access to information for journalists and regular weekly meetings to address problems of media workers in the province.

Overall, in this week, the media outlets and media workers were complaining about financial problems, unemployment and lack of access to information. Beating of two journalists in Nengahar province reveals the lack of physical safety of journalists in addition to the above mentioned problems.