

## Afghan Media at a Glance

3<sup>rd</sup> week December 2021

Working sessions and meetings of AJCS representatives with journalists and government officials have continued. The decline in the number of journalists and professional staff in the media was one of key findings.

### Eastern Region:

AJSC representatives have met with journalists, media and government officials in eastern provinces to discuss issues such as the general situation of journalists, safety issues and access to information.

**Nangarhar:** AJSC representative met with the newly appointed spokesperson of Jalalabad Municipality. In this introductory meeting, the mayor's spokesman was asked to cooperate with journalists in timely access to information on matters related to municipality.

**Laghman:** At a meeting marking the seventh anniversary of a local media outlet, AJSC representative called on government officials, particularly the provincial director of information and culture to address journalists' problems on access to information.

**Kunar:** AJSC representative met with local media reporters in the province and asked for their views on media and access to information. Journalists once again emphasized that the government should pay more attention on access to information and safety of journalists and media workers.

### North-east Region:

**Takhar:** A currently active media in Takhar continue to broadcast with one or two media workers and are unable to attract employees due to financial problems. However, access to information has been somehow improved through provincial Department of Information and Culture. Though, broadcasting women's voices in media is yet barred.

There are still concerns about safety of journalists in the province. According to Takhar journalists, lack of income has been their main problem at the moment which has put media in financial predicament and a critical situation.

**Badakhshan:** Provincial officials have allowed female journalists working on YouTube channels to report from within the city and bazaars for the past two weeks.

Banowan Radio has not been active for more than a month due to financial problems; But Badakhshan Department of Information and Culture has allowed media staff to resume their activities and has promised to cooperate. On the other hand, none of the six media outlets that had collapsed has resumed broadcasting.

Officials of Badakhshan province and Department of Information and Culture are more lenient with the media but their serious emphasis is on adhering to the government's policy. No media outlet has the right to publish movies, dramas, songs and entertainment programs except for broadcast of religious material

Although the director of information and culture in Badakhshan province has allowed female employees to engage in media, women in the province have not yet resumed media activities due to fears and anxieties.

**Kunduz:** Shabnam Radio has resumed its work in Kunduz Province as one of the oldest women radio stations in the province but due to ban of women in media it will resume broadcasting by male media workers.

**Baghlan:** The Department of Information and Culture does not allow interviews to any journalists or media outlets without prior permission of the department. Even the most basic information should pass through the filter of this department and then reach to media.

#### South-east Region:

**Khost:** Unlike some other provinces where media are guided to broadcast only religious programs, entertainment and some music programs are also broadcast along with religious programs in this province.

Media progressively face shortage of professional medial workers and this has negative impact on the quality of media broadcasts. This is mainly due to the financial weakness of the media not able to pay their professional employees.

Khost Department of Information and Culture occasionally holds meetings with reporters for further coordination but provincial officials have not yet held a meeting with reporters.

**Paktia:** Access to information in Paktia has improved over the past three months. Various provincial departments contact and invite journalists to their press conferences. Provincial security departments are still not cooperating with journalists and media. Journalists working on investigative topics still face difficulties and can hardly obtain information in this regard.

**Paktika:** Provincial director of information and culture has the right to speak to journalists and media while no other provincial officials are sharing information with journalists. In order to solve this problem AJSC representative met with the director of information and culture of Paktika province.

**Logar:** There are still problems in accessing information. Last week, AJSC representative had a meeting with the governor. Logar governor assured AJSC representative, journalists and media officials that he would take serious measures to improve access to information and no necessary information would be hidden from the media.

### West Region:

**Ghor:** AJSC representative met with the Director of Information and Culture to discuss the need of government support to journalists to ensure their safety, access to better information and improve cooperation of government officials with media. It was agreed to discuss and work on more issues in subsequent meetings. It was decided to talk to reporters in meetings and over the phone; their problems would be identified and appropriate solutions would be measured.

Badghis: Abdul Raziq Siddiqi, the managing director of an audio media in Badghis, says: "After the recent developments, the financial situation of local media has changed." He added that due to financial problems, they have reduced their staff to a minimum extent. According to Siddiqi, if the situation continues and the media cannot generate income, majority of local media in the province would be closed.

However, subsequent to the meetings of AJSC representative with provincial director of information and culture, provincial officials share information with reporters to some extent.