

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan



نای حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد در افغانستان
Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan

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As it was predicted to be a difficult year for journalists and media in Afghanistan, the first days of 2014 showed that it is going to be a year full of serious challenges for journalists.

Killing of two journalists, one in Kabul and other in Lashkargah City, in January 2014 rang the bells alarming deteriorating security situation for media personnel and journalists across the country. Moreover, a number of journalists were threatened, insulted, and beaten in the same month.

Along with concerns over the safety of journalists, efforts to impose limitations against journalists have been intensified. Referring media dossiers to judicial institutions, lack of access to information and media's intra-organizational problems are among other challenges that Afghanistan journalists and media are facing in 2014.

Article 34 of Afghanistan Constitution explicitly protects freedom of speech and considers this basic and significant human value immune from any assault. However, as it is observed, some powerbrokers and even the State, in particular the Government have violated this article and assaulted on freedom of speech time and again.

Some State officials regard freedom of speech only to the extent that it does not hurt their private or group interests. There have been several cases in the past 10 years in which journalists have been threatened, insulted and even beaten as their reports have put the private interests of State officials in jeopardy.

In the latest episode, constructing dossiers against certain media and referring them to judicial institutions including the Office of the Attorney General, has raised concerns among the journalists and media community.

On the other hand, as Election and the full transition of security responsibilities to the Afghan forces are approaching, concerns within journalists advocacy organizations rise. The State's ever-increasing efforts to curb media are intensified. Such efforts include amending the Mass Media Law, blocking approval of the Access to Information Law. The Ministry of Information and Culture would like to increase its control over media through amending the Mass Media Law. In sum, the Government of Afghanistan would like to block access and disclose of some information that may hurt some officials' private interests through preventing the approval of the Access to Information Law.

Following these highlights, the current report investigates and covers the following topics:

- 1. Two journalists were killed in two days in Afghanistan**
- 2. Director of Berlik TV was beaten in Takhaar Province**
- 3. Relatives of Zabul Provincial Head of Education Department beat a journalist**
- 4. A State official beat Khorshid TV journalists in Kabul**
- 5. Head of Takhaar Electricity Company insulted journalists**
- 6. Dossiers of visual media sent to the Office of Attorney General**
- 7. Nai criticized the Election Commission's Media Commission Bill**
- 8. Media advocacy institutions welcomed President's decision to forgive and close media dossiers**
- 9. Aikhanum TV started probationary broadcasting in Takhaar Province**

Mysterious kill of a journalist in Helmand Province

Police detected the body of Noor Ahmad Noory, a producer at Radio Bost of Helmand Province who had previously cooperated with The New York Times, in Shorman are of Karte Lagan in Lashkargah in the darkness of night on Jan 24, 2014. The body was put into a bag with both hands tied in the back.

Officials from forensic medicine have said that he was tortured and beaten before killed. Two signs of knife cuts were observed in his head.

Khaled, Mr. Noory's brother told Media Watch that his brother had been frequently threatened to death and had, therefore, quitted from his previous job with the foreign newspaper.

Noor Ahmad Noory has operated two programs in Radio Bost, a daily one called Mehraab and a weekly one called Monbar, in the past three years.

Abdul Salam Zahed, Director of Radio Bost in Helmand Province, told the Media Watch: "The motive behind the killing is not clear to us yet and Police should investigate the case. But I have no information on any recent threat against him. He was not only a good producer, but also a Haafed (memorizer) of Quran. His programs had no problems."



Mr. Noory was presenting religious programs on certain religious occasions.

Mohammad Naim, Governor of Helmand, told reporters in the hospital, where Mr. Noory's body was preserved, that he has issued an order to the intelligence and security organs to seriously assess and investigate the case of killing.

Helmand is one of the most dangerous provinces for journalists. Journalists in this province have constantly faced threats while conducting their duty.

Detecting the body of Mr. Noor Ahmad Noory, a producer and journalist for local Radio Bost, in the center of the provincial capital Lashkargah indicates how severe the situation across Afghanistan has gotten for journalists. In particular it shows that journalists are not safe anymore even in the centers of urban areas which are under the government's control.

This is the first case of a journalist's murder in Afghanistan in 2014. After the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, there have been 38 journalists killed in the country. None of these cases have been thoroughly investigated and perpetrators have been neither identified nor punished.

Abdul Samad Rouhani, a BBC journalist, was killed in the same mysterious manner in the same city in 2008. Six years have been passed now and in spite of frequent promises from local authorities in Helmand Province, no perpetrator has even been identified or arrested.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan has issued a statement in which it expressed its condolences to the family, colleagues and friends of Late Mr. Noory and asks detective organs in Helmand Province to restore the trust of citizens and in particular the journalists through identifying and submitting the perpetrators of this crime. Failing to investigate the dossiers of murdered journalists and to punish the perpetrators will erode the citizens' trust on the State.

A Radio Nawa Journalist killed in a suicide attack in Kabul

Ahamd Shaahed Naimi, 20 years old, was killed along with some other citizens by a suicide attack in Kart e Naw area in Kabul while on his way to his office at Radio Nawa and Saba TV on Jan 26, 2014. Taliban assumed responsibility for the attack.

Ahmad Shaahed had just joined journalism and started as a presenter and producer of literary programs at Radio Nawa. He was also a student at the Kabul University's Literature Department.

Salmaa Soory, Head of Saba Broadcasting Center which also covers Radio Nawa, said: "Ahamd Shaahed Naimi was killed in the suicide attack in Kart e Naw area in eastern Kabul at 7:30 am on Jan 26, 2014."



According to Ms. Soory, Mr. Naimi was waiting for the Center's transportation vehicle to pick him up to the office when a suicide attacker hit a Ministry of Defense's vehicle and exploded.

Authorities at the Ministry of Defense say that the target of this suicide attack was the National Army's bus which was carrying the army personnel.

Mohamad Zaher Azimi, spokesperson for Ministry of Defense, stated that at least four people were killed and 22 others injured in this attack.

Meanwhile Taliban has responsibility for the attack in a message sent to media.

This is the second incident of a journalist's kill in only two days in Afghanistan. Prior to this, Mr. Noor Ahmad Noory, a journalist at local Radio Bost was mysteriously killed in Lashkargah, Helmand on Jan 24, 2014.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan condemns such attacks, sends its condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Mr. Shaahed Naimi, and asks the Government of Afghanistan to devise and pursue appropriate measures and strategies for ensuring the safety of citizens and journalists.

Nai believes that terrorism recognizes no border in killing innocent people. It, therefore, asks the State of Afghanistan to use its full possibilities at hand to eradicate this ominous phenomenon so that all citizens of this country including the journalists can safely perform their duties.

Director of Berlik TV was beaten in Takhaar Province

Mohammad Reza Ghafoori, Director of Berlik TV in Takhaar Province, claims that when he wanted to interview the media section of Takhaar Governor Office, he was threatened, insulted and beaten by a criminal investigator.



Mohammad Reza Ghafoori

told Nai's Media Watch: "After my journalistic equipment was checked at the entrance of the Governor's Office, I entered the yard and faced an individual who introduced himself as a criminal investigator and asked for my identity. I introduced myself and presented my ID card. It did not convince him. He first insulted me and then slapped me on the face."

Mr. Ghafoori says that journalists are not treated properly in Takhaar Province and this situation of insulting and beating journalists should change.

After this incident, Mr. Ghafoori informed Takhaar Governor about it and complaint from the involved criminal investigator who beat him. According to Mr. Ghafoori, Takhaar Governor promised to punish the perpetrator.

Mr. Ghafoori has provided Media Watch with videos that show a man dressed in local costume beating him.

Meanwhile, Sonatullah Timor, spokesperson for Governor of Takhaar, told Media Watch: "The journalist from Berlik TV intended to conduct an interview with me when this incident happened. The Governor has taken this issue seriously and has shifted the perpetrator to another office."

The spokesperson for the Governor of Takhaar continued: “We always try to be in good terms with journalists and punish those who behave inappropriately with them.”

Media Watch condemns beating of Berlik TV journalist in Takhaar Province and asks the security authorities to prevent any government official to assault on journalists and media based on their individual motives.

Whenever security forces prevent a journalist from performing his/her duty, they in fact deprive citizens from their basic right of access to information.

Security forces’ inappropriate conduct toward journalists will erode the image of government in the public eyes and continuation of such a situation will increase the distance between citizens and the State.

Media Watch asks Takhaar Province authorities to prevent careless and law-breaking conduct of some security forces toward the journalists and refer the perpetrators to the judicial organs.

Relatives of Zabul Provincial Head of Education Department beat a journalist

Zalmai Halimi, a journalist for the National Radio Television who also contributes to the virtual page Khabaryal, claims that relatives of Zabul Provincial Head of Education Department beat him on Jan 03, 2014.

Zalmai Halimi told Media Watch that the cause of his beating by the relatives of the Provincial Head of Education is a report that he published earlier in which some residents of Shah Joy district criticized the former and accused him of corruption.

Mr. Halimi said: “I prepared that report on the basis of the residents’ complaints. They were quoted in the report as saying that the Provincial Head of Education takes money for each closed school in the province.”

The journalist was threatened by the Provincial Head of Education after he published the report. He says: “The Zabul Provincial Head of Education contacted me via telephone and threatened to introduce me to the judicial and legal organs.”

Bashir Ahmad Faizan, the Journalists Union official in the province, told Media Watch: “The officials from Education Department of Zabul Province reacted to a report about their department and the relatives of the Head of the Department beat Zalmai Halimi who prepared the report.”

Mr. Halimi, the journalist who has been beaten, says that the Ministry of Education should take immediate measures to prevent the corruption in its provincial department in Zabul Province.

He expresses his concern that if such cases are not seriously investigated by the responsible authorities then it will be harder for journalists to operate in this province.

The Provincial Head of Education Department in Zabul does not reject the beating of the journalist but does not accept his involvement in the incident.

Rahimullah Lodin, Zabul Provincial Head of Education Department, told Media Watch that this case has no connection with the Department of Education. But he accepted that the person who has beaten the journalist is his brother and works as a journalist.”

Mr. Halimi also claims that his previous reports that disclosed corruption and injustice in the province have created serious problems for him including threats and insults.

This is the first incident of beating a journalist recorded in 2014. In 2013, three journalists were killed, seven injured, 26 were threatened and insulted and 34 others were beaten.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan is concerned over an increase in incidence of violence against journalists in the current year.

Nai asks the State of Afghanistan for yet another time to punish the perpetrators of violence against journalists. Failing to properly investigate dossiers of violence against media and journalists will still contribute to further increasing the incidence of such violent acts, making it harder for journalists to properly function, and ultimately widening the gap between citizens and the State.

A State official beat Khorshid TV journalists in Kabul

A State official beat Khorshid TV's Latif Azizi, the reporter, Zemarai Ahmadzai, the cameraman, and Hedayat Halimi, the driver when they attempted to cross a street in the Second District of Kabul City on Jan 08, 2014.

Latif Azizi, Khorshid TV's reporter told Media Watch: “My cameraman colleague, Zemarai Ahmadzai, and I were on our way to the Ministry of Commerce to conduct an interview. Our driver had to slow down in a traffic jam in the Zer-e-Zamini area when a luxury car with a State plate came from the back and honked on us to make way for it. Our driver told them that it is traffic jam and nearly impossible for us to move and that if they were in a hurry, they could pass through the opposite side. Hearing this, they got off their vehicle and beat our driver. When I got

off to mediate, they also beat me and my cameraman. When they realized that we were journalists and were recording the scene, they escaped.”

What can be learned from these journalists’ story is that the perpetrators have been governmental authorities who do not behave appropriately with citizens and pedestrians and tend to violently react to minimal issues.

The journalists claim that the individuals who beat them are eventually guards or staff of the Presidential Palace, the Arg. Asked about the basis of their claim, Mr. Azizi said: “We have filmed the number plate of the vehicle which carries a logo of Presidential Palace.”

Officials at the Presidential Palace reject the claims that their staff has been involved in beating journalists and ask for solid evidence. They comment that the current evidence is so weak.

Emal Faizi, the Spokesperson for the Presidential Palace, told Media Watch: “Regardless of who has committed such a violent action, be it staff of the Palace or any other organ, it is illegal. We condemn it. The moving images that the journalists have presented have not been identified yet and the case has remained as a claim until now. We cannot decide and take appropriate action until we identify those in the images.”

Meanwhile the Ministry of Interior is searching for those individuals who have beaten the journalists. Sediq Sediqi, Spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, told Media Watch that the police have started its investigations to identify and arrest those individuals.

The journalists who were beaten by the government officials have appreciated police interference that prevented from escalation of violence on the scene and asks them to arrest the perpetrators.

This is not the first time that State officials have beaten journalists. Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan’s annual report, just published, reported 76 cases of violence against journalists in 2013 including 50 cases in which State officials have been responsible for violent acts.

Nai’s Media Watch believes that beating journalists, regardless of the motives and the actors involved, is illegal and according to the country’s penal law is recognized as a crime.

State authorities should set a precedent to others in abiding by the rule of law. Any misuse of designated authority will harm the rule of law and will frustrate the citizens. The State of Afghanistan must first observe the behavior and conduct of State authorities and should punish those who violate rule of law to set a precedent for other citizens.

Although the profession of the individuals beaten up in this case has not been a factor, but the incident nonetheless shows that some State authorities misuse their designated authority and conduct violent actions against citizens on the streets.

Nai's Media Watch requests from the President to issue an order to identify and arrest the perpetrators in this case. This will help enforce the State's determination toward defending freedom of speech. It will also help prevent other State authorities from abusing misusing their designated authority over citizens and journalists.

Head of Takhaar Electricity Company insulted journalists

Shafiq Poya and Nasir Saadeq, journalists of Khorshid TV and 1 TV Network in north eastern zone of the country, claim that Haji Mohamad Momen, Head of Takhaar Electricity Company has insulted them.

After a two-week long cut in the electricity supply in Takhaar Province, the journalists went to the office of the Head of the Takhaar Electricity Company to seek for reasons behind the cut. The journalists claim that the Head of the Brishna Company in Takhaar Province did not want to talk to journalists and share with media the reasons behind the power supply cut in the first place. But when the journalists insist, Mr. Momen meets with the journalists. After journalists begin to ask him questions, he started to use inappropriate words, said that they do not have the right to ask him questions and used his guards to expel the journalists from his office.

Shafiq Poya, a journalist for Khorshid TV in Takhaar Province, told Media Watch in a telephone conversation: "After waiting for half an hour behind the office of the Head of Electricity Company in Takhaar Province, he finally agreed to let us in and meet. As we entered his office, his behavior was not appropriate and he immediately asked his guards to take us out back. They also wanted to beat us and harm our equipment."

Both journalists say that although over \$ 30 million has been invested on reconstructing electricity [network] in Takhaar, a two-week long cut in supply has driven citizens to the edges. Their complaints have reached media. The citizens have a right to know about the reasons behind the cut in power supply. When the media reflected the questions and critiques of the public, the Head of the Electricity Company reacted through avoiding talking with journalists and media.

Nasir Saadeq, a journalist for 1 TV Network, told Media Watch: "The behavior of the Head of Electricity Company in Takhaar Province with us was unjustifiable. He even responded to one of

our questions as: ‘if the electricity is gone, it will come back; what kind of a problem can this be?’”

But Mr. Haji Mohammad Momen, Head of Electricity Company in Takhaar Province, told Media Watch: “Nobody has been insulted. These journalists did not give him enough time to get ready for the interview.”

The journalists claim that they have waited for half an hour behind his office’s entrance and he had enough time to prepare himself for the interview.

Lack of access to information is a challenge that journalists are facing throughout Afghanistan. Takhaar journalists say that they have frequently faced this problem with both governmental and nongovernmental administrations which in some cases have led to beating of journalists.

Aqubatullah Adibyar, Head of Information and Culture Department in Takhaar Province confirms journalists’ problems with regard to access to information. He says that some authorities sometimes hide information from journalists due to unawareness about the law, journalism and freedom of speech.

Head of Information and Culture Department in Takhaar Province commenting on the journalists’ recent problem with the Head of Province’s Electricity Company says that the journalists who claim to be insulted by the Head of Electricity Company have not complaint about it to the Provincial Department of Information and Culture. But he emphasized that he will soon convene a joint meeting with both the journalists and the Head of Electricity Company in which the latter will be asked to respond the allegations made by journalists.

Nai’s Media Watch considers lack of access to information as one of main challenges on the way of journalists in Afghanistan and repeatedly asks the State of Afghanistan to approve the Law of Access to Information as the right [of access to information] is also explicitly stated in the Constitution.

Media Watch condemns the behavior of Head of the Electricity Company in Takhaar Province and asserts that citizens have every right to access information which is only possible through media and journalists engagement.

Instead of behaving inappropriately against the journalists, the Head of Electricity in Takhaar Province needed to explicitly share the reasons behind the power supply cut so that in one hand the citizens’ concerns were met and on the other hand their trust on the company was increased.

The right to access to information is a basic right of the citizens of a democratic society. The Constitution of Afghanistan has granted this right to the citizens. Therefore, every governmental or nongovernmental authority that deprives citizens from their basic right, commit an anti-Constitutional act and are eligible for legal pursuit.

On the other hand, hiding facts and information by the governmental authorities can erode the relation between the citizens and their State and will discourage the former to cooperate with the latter.

The Office of the Attorney General investigates about the commercial advertisements with no open source

The Office of the Attorney General has said that it launched investigations about some visual media outlets that have broadcast commercial advertisements without mentioning their sources.

Authorities at the Office of the Attorney General say that they have got evidence about some commercial advertisements broadcast by some audio and visual media outlets and have launched serious investigations about them.

Basir Azizi, the Spokesperson for the Office of the Attorney General, told journalists in a press conference held at the government's media center: "Any Commercial advertisement with no clear funding source is called as pseudo-awareness and this has its special ruling in the law." He continued: "We have launched our investigations about it. if their addresses are not accurate, they are pseudo-information which according to the effective laws of the country is a crime. We can pursue their dossiers up to the triple courts."

The Government's Information and Media Center has recently asked the Office of the Attorney General to investigate about the media which broadcast advertisements with unknown addresses in regards with the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement with the United States.

The Center's authorities say that they have frequently asked media to abide by laws and the principle of impartiality in their broadcasting.

Sefatullah Saafi, one of the Center's authorities, say: "Broadcasting commercial advertisements with unknown addresses on political issues such as the signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement between Kabul and Washington has pushed them to refer such cases to the legal and judicial organs.

Although the Government's Information and Media Center does not mention of any specific media outlet, but says that broadcasting such programs [and advertisements?] can harm the psychological security of the society and this is illegal.

Mr. Saafi, Head of the Government's Information and Media Center, expressed his concerns about the [possible] involvement of foreign hands behind such advertisements in the same press conference held in Kabul: "If a party, a political figure, or a member of the parliament comments on this issue, the State does not see any problem in it, but the problem is that when the address is not clear, then how an advertisement is broadcast? We have fears that such advertisements may be directed from abroad with a particular and mysterious objective that is connected to our foreign policy. Our foreign policy should not be degraded to commercial advertisements."

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan has reacted to this issue.

The Nai Office calls the government's measure as in contrast with the country's Media Law and states that this act means putting limitations and pressure on media.

Abdul Mojib Khalwatgar, Executive Director of Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, stated in a press conference held on this topic at the Nai Office: "The President's office tries to make media and the public to think along the same lines they do. This contradicts the speeches made by President Hamid Karzai and also runs against the effective laws of the country."

The Ministry of Information and Culture has said that any media outlet that may broadcast commercial advertisements with political aspects and without mentioning the funding sources will be legally pursued. Nai's Media Watch believes that article 43 of the Mass Media Law has charged the Mass Media Commission with the authority of detecting media violations and crimes. What is the legal basis for the Office of the Attorney General to pursue and detect media crimes? Whereas its authorities do not supersede those of the Mass Media Commission in matters of media violations to grant it the permission to interfere before the Commission. Therefore, any interference of the Office of Attorney General is in violation with the effective laws of Afghanistan.

Nai criticized the Election Commission's Media Commission Bill

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan considers the Independent Election Commission's Media Commission Bill in violation with the country's Constitution.

This bill has emphasized on immunity of candidates' privacy, publishing topics on the basis of evidence, equal behavior toward all candidates, election campaign expenditures, accuracy in announcing the results of the Election and more topics.

Officials at Nai Office say that the bill has problems from a legal writing perspective and includes articles that run against the Constitution.

Abdul Mojib Khalwatgar, Executive Director of Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, stated in a press conference in Kabul: "Every bill should be in accordance with the effective laws, describing the law not creating a new obligation."

Nai Executive said that media institutions should be previously consulted on this bill while the authorities at the IEC's Media Commission has stated in their press conference that they have already consulted with the journalists and media institutions.

Meanwhile, Mr. Khalwatgar said that Nai made every effort until the last moment to put necessary reforms in the bill, but the IEC's Media Commission did not accept any reforms.

Although the officials at the IEC's Media Commission claimed that they have included into the bill the opinions and suggestions made by media, yet, the bill contains a lot of shortcomings.

Nai suggests the following points to reform the IEC's Media Commission Bill:

- According to legal hierarchy, every bill should be in accordance with the effective laws, further describing them rather than implying a new obligation.
- This bill has several problems from a legal writing perspective, for instance: in article 11 it has used the term "retardation" instead of "violation". It has also used the word "commission" to refer to both the Media Commission and the Election Commission without prior notification. This is confusing. On the other hand, the Commission should have explained the conditions for polling rather than referring them to another bill which increases confusion and is not in line with modern legal writing.
- According to Article 61 of the Elections Law, this commission is established for mass media. Therefore, regulating activities of other institutions is beyond its legal mandate (Article 1, Item2)

- According to Article 61 of the Elections Law, the Mass Media Commission has the mandate of observing media contents. According the Elections Law, only candidates are obliged to report their electoral campaign's expenditures to the Election Commission. Asking media to present their financial reports as this bill requires, is not within the mandate of the Media Commission and is in violation with Article 26 of the Mass Media Law. This article obliges media to present their annual financial reports to the High Council of Media and the Ministry of Finance. Also if the candidates present false figures, according to Article 68 of the Elections Law, this will be considered as "retardation" and not "violation". Since the Media Commission is only mandated to deal with "violations", therefore the issue of financial report is drops off here. Also making the party-affiliated media to present their finances is in violation with law as such media operate within the party which in turn has responsibilities before the Election Complaints Commission and not media commission.
- On the other hand, candidates' expenses will not be limited to media alone, so it will not irrational to regulate and observe their expenses through media. The Law has set the limit for candidates' expenses and obliges them to report their expenditure methods. Obliging media instead of candidates is in violation with Election Law.

This bill has not distinguished between party media activities and mass media activities. It needs to clearly make this distinction.

Overall, the IEC's Media Commission has set constraints through this bill to control media during the election time. Nai demands the IEC's Media Commission to revise this bill.

President has forgiven all dossiers of media and journalists

President Karzai has issued a decree to forgive all journalists' dossiers that have been in process in the legal and judicial institutions in the past ten years on Jan 11, 2014. These dossiers include all complaints that have been made against the country's various media and been in process in the Office of the Attorney General and its branch offices.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan welcomes and appreciates the President's appropriate decision.

Sidiqullah Tawhidi, Director of Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan stated in a press conference held on this occasion: "The illegal Commission for Assessing Media

Violations has unfortunately created dossiers for several media and journalists in recent years. For various reasons, it has referred those dossiers to the legal and judicial institutions.” Tawhidi continued: “With the President’s recent decision, the journalists’ community is now ensured that continuing in their professional path they will not face any serious legal challenges.”

Mr. Tawhidi continued: “Our demand is that the [deliberately] creating of such dossiers should be prevented in the first place.”

Emal Faizi, the Spokesperson for President Karzai, stated in a press conference: “The legal and judicial meeting on Jan 09, 2014 decided to forgive the journalists’ dossiers.”

Mr. Faizi added that based on this decision, all dossiers related to media and journalists that have been in process in the Office of the Attorney General will be frozen and exempted from any further legal pursuit.

President Karzai has recently promised in a meeting with media professionals in the Presidential Palace that he will forgive all journalists who have had a dossier.

Media unions and advocacy organizations welcomed the President’s promise and asked him to formalize it through an official decree.

Nai’s Media Watch demands from the State of Afghanistan to act within the boundaries of the country’s effective Media Law against allegations of illegal broadcasting/publishing attributed to some media outlets. According to this Law, the Mass Media Commission and the High Council of Media should be established and should immediately replace the illegal commission made up by the Minister of Information and Culture for advancement of his own programs.

Media Watch also demands from Afghanistan’s media to prevent broadcasting/publishing issues that cause division, ethnic conflicts and religious and ethnic supremacy so that in one hand media maintain their credit and on the other hand they face no legal or judicial challenges.

Aikhanum TV started probationary broadcasting in Takhaar Province

Aikhanum Private TV Station launched its probationary broadcasting in Taluqan city, the provincial capital of Takhaar on Jan 07, 2014 which will turn to permanent broadcasting after completing broadcasting contents and equipment as well as administrative procedures.

Ataullah Obaidi, Director of Aikhanum Radio and TV, told Nai’s Media Watch about their objective as including “raising the voice of Takhaar citizens, illustrating the problems and challenges that people face in Takhaar Province, and struggle against ignorance.”

According to Mr. Obaidi, this TV will broadcast in three languages: Farsi-Dari, Uzbek, and Pashto. It will prioritize awareness raising programs for women and children, news and sports. State officials in Takhaar Province welcomed the launching of Aikhanum TV Station. Aqubatullah Adibyar, Head of Provincial Department of Information and Culture promised to cooperate with the TV Station.

This is the second private TV station to be launched in Takhaar Province and is welcomed by citizens of Taluqan and of other neighboring provinces.

Meanwhile Radio Aikhanum, which has been broadcasting for several years across the province, has managed to attract a significant number of audiences among Takhaar citizens. Now officials from this Radio have launched the Aikhanum TV Station to compete with other Afghanistan media outlets.

Nai's Media Watch considers the launch of this TV Station an appropriate step in promoting democracy and tolerance. It also believes that launch of every new media outlet in the country can pave the way for cultural, economic and social progress through keeping citizens informed.

Those in charge of new media outlets which enter the competition are obliged to have a thorough understanding of their audience as well as awareness about the social and cultural conditions in their society. They would broadcast programs that will not run in violation of cultural and social relations in their communities. They would try to promote tolerance and understanding and employ accuracy in reporting.

Media have responsibility to orientate the society toward welfare and happiness and invite individuals to follow the rule of law. They can achieve these goals best by themselves following the rule of law and setting precedents to the rest in society.

Attention!

All journalists and media organizations are hereby notified that Mr. Mohammad Qasem Rahmani works with the Media Watch in the capacity of Media Lawyer. Those journalists and/or media outlets that face legal issues in connection with their media related and journalistic activities, or need consultation on performing such activities, may contact him by phone at **0799 830 905** or via email at: m.qasim@nai.org.af.

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To obtain a soft copy of the report, please visit the following link: <http://www.nai.org.af/Mediawatch.htm>

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