



نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan



Media Watch Report

Owner Nai
Monthly Report #127
December

Sediqullah Tawhidi Media Watch Director and Media Analyst

0700279176-0777868270

tauhidi@nai.org.af



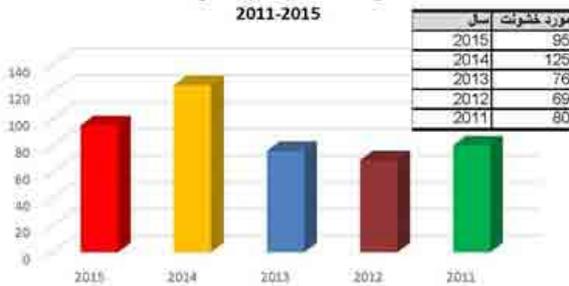
Media Watch Report

The current issue of Media Watch newsletter covers the following topics:

- Media Watch Annual Report: 2015 was the worst year for Afghanistan's journalists and media
- Nai Survey: Afghanistan's journalists are denied access to military, legal, and judicial information
- Governors of Bamyán and Daikundi provinces restricted access to information
- Nai Office concerned about recent assassination attempts on journalists and media activists in Kabul
- Assassination attempt on Chakaad-local-TV journalist in Herat province
- Daesh (=ISIS) launched their so-called 'Voice of the Caliphate' Radio broadcast in eastern Afghanistan
- A Noor-TV journalist claimed to have been beaten by Kabul Police
- Journalists complained about inappropriate behavior of deputy director for Protocol Division of the President's Office during the President's visit in Europe
- The Media Complaints and Violation Investigations Commission formed
- Konjkaw publication joined media family



Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015



سئرسی به کدام اطلاعات برای تان مشکل است؟





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Since the fall of Taliban regime in 2001, journalists and media in Afghanistan spent their worst year in 2015. Violence against journalists and media soared as 95 cases were registered throughout the past year. A dangerously unprecedented level of violence against the country's media and journalists was recorded when terrorists captured Kunduz city and immediately began a street-by-street search for media and kill media workers. Although, they threatened all media workers to death; fortunately, they could not capture any journalists.

When media published and broadcasted Taliban's crimes against humanity during their brief occupation of Kunduz city, Kunduz province, they began threatening journalists and Kabul-based media.

Two weeks after Taliban's occupation of Kunduz city and their consequent defeat and recapture of city by the security forces, the terrorist group issued a statement in which they threatened to death journalists and staffs of Tolo TV, Lemar TV, and 1 TV stations. In their statement, Taliban clearly said that they will consider those media outlets and their workers as military targets.

The right of access to information for the country's citizens and journalists is protected by the Constitution and the Law of Access to Information and the state is obliged to provide essential facilities in citizens' access to information. However, Afghanistan's citizens and journalists still face problems in getting access to information from state administration. According a poll conducted by Nai in the last days of 2015, access to information from military, legal, and judicial institutions is the most difficult and time-taking.

Targeted attempts to assassinate media activists and journalists in the past month has strongly concerned media and journalists support organizations. Seven journalists and media activists were targeted in Kabul city in the past month; one of them was killed and another one was seriously injured.

A police officer in Kabul city also beat up a Noor-TV journalist. Then officials in Kabul Police Headquarters called the incident as a "misunderstanding" and overlooked it.

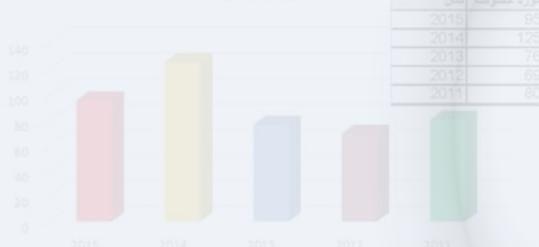
In another assassination attempt, unidentified armed persons stopped and stabbed a Chakaad-local-TV journalist in Herat city, Herat province, while he was on his way home. The journalist was injured; the attackers fled the scene and are still remained unidentified and hence uncaptured by the law enforcement forces.

Meanwhile, a group of journalists accompanied President Ghani in his visit to Europe to participate in Paris Climate Change Conference 2015 last month. They complained about indecent and insulting behavior of deputy director of Protocol Division of the President's Office. The journalists reported that the deputy director of Protocol Division was not only refusing to cooperate with journalists but was also insulting them during the visit.

The Daesh (=ISIS) terrorist group launched their so-called "Voice of the Caliphate" radio station in eastern Afghanistan last month. They broadcasted hatred messages and encouraged people to stand against the state and the entire political system. Launching of radio and other mediums by enemies of humanity and terrorists groups is a serious setback for freedom of speech in the country and damages people's trust in the state.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan calls once again upon the State of Afghanistan to be sensitive and alert to such cases and do not allow terrorist groups to exploit the open media space for recruiting new members and launching negative propaganda against the people and the political system of Afghanistan.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Media Watch Annual Report: 2015 was the worst year for Afghanistan's journalists and media

Last year was the worst year for freedom of speech and media in Afghanistan. Media Watch recorded 95 cases of violence against journalists in Afghanistan in 2015. There were 24 cases of organized violence against media recorded. After Taliban occupied Kunduz city, they threatened to death all journalists and employees of 24 media outlets including Tolo TV, Tolo News, Lemar TV, 1 TV as well as all other media that were based in Kunduz.

Four journalists were killed in Afghanistan in 2015. Mohammad Aqel Weqar, a former journalist for local Spinghar Radio was shot to death on January 17, 2015 when he attended a friend's wedding party in Batikot district. A year after he was shot, the attackers and perpetrators have not been identified yet.

Yama Behzad, a freelancer in Badakhshan province, was the second journalist killed in 2015. He was killed on September 18, 2015. Initially, a grenade was thrown into Mr. Behzad's house. When Mr. Behzad opened the entrance to check what was going on, a mine placed under his house entrance exploded and killed him on the spot.

Zabihullah Pashtunyar is the third journalist killed in the country in 2015. He was killed during an American forces' air strike on the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Hospital in Kunduz city on October 3, 2015. Mr. Pashtunyar was on duty as the hospital's night-shift guard when the attack took place.

Amanullah Attayi, director of Asia private TV station, was assassinated in Kabul on December 12, 2015.

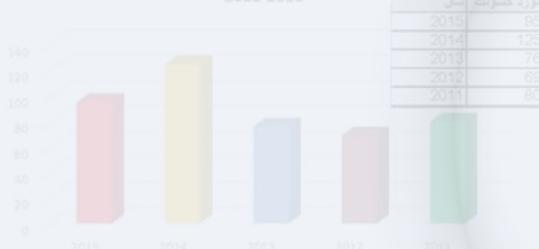
Three other journalists were injured in separate incidents in 2015. Meanwhile four journalists were either briefly detained and released or were abducted by Taliban and then freed from their custody.

Also there were forty other journalists either threatened or insulted by various parties or were illegally summoned by state institutions, particularly the Office of the Attorney General and the National Security Directorate.

Most of the cases of violence against journalists in 2015 were committed by Taliban. Out of a total number of 95 registered cases of violence against journalists, Taliban involved in 40 cases which also include threatening of all journalists and staffs of 24 media outlets including Tolo TV, 1 TV, and a number of locally-based media in Kunduz, Nangarhar, and Kandahar provinces. Another 32 cases of violence against journalists were committed by the State of Afghanistan. The perpetrators of 22 cases have remained unidentified. Only one case of violence against journalists was committed by the international forces, in which a journalist who was on his second duty as a night shift guard at the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Hospital in Kunduz city in American air raids. The raids were conducted to drive Taliban forces out of Kunduz city.

In contrast, there were 125 cases of violence against journalists registered in 2014. However, in 2015, Taliban threatened to death all journalists and staffs of at least 24 media outlets in the country. This has caused a serious concern among journalists and media staffs in Afghanistan.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

In a press conference on December 31, 2015, Sidiqullah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, shared the Media Watch annual report and raised their concerns regarding the situation of journalists in the country. Mr. Tuwhidi called upon the Government of Afghanistan to take all necessary measures to protect journalists and improve freedom of speech in Afghanistan.

Director of Media Watch said: "Leaders of the National Unity Government are obliged, based on their commitment to the media community before they reached power, to address and follow up cases of murder and other types of violence against journalists and punish the perpetrators according to the effective laws of the country."

The real figure of violence against journalists in Afghanistan is higher than what is stated in this report. On the other hand, a number of journalists who experienced violence from various sides have chosen to withdraw their names from the report. They think if their names are mentioned here, then threats against them will intensify.

Nai Survey: Afghanistan's journalists are denied access to military, legal, and judicial information

A survey conducted by Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan has found that access to information is daunting and challenging task for journalists around the country. The survey was conducted in five major cities of Afghanistan.

The survey asked 300 journalists in five provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Kandahar, Herat, and Nangarhar questions about their access to information.

Nearly half of the respondents (47.55 percent) said that they faced problems in getting access to military information and they were unable to get timely access to military information.

Around 38.87 percent of respondents said that it was difficult for them to get access to legal and judicial information.

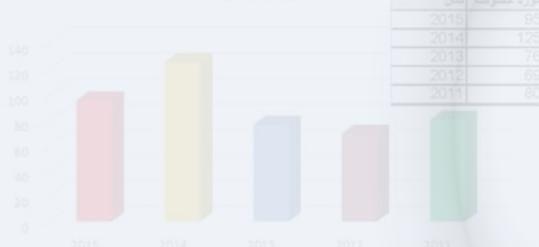
Nearly 13 percent of respondents also reported difficulty in getting access to economical and human rights information.

Depending to where the journalists work, the type of information they face difficulty in getting access to varies. Journalists in Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, and Nangarhar find it difficult to get access to military information. Nearly half of the respondents in Kabul (44.44 percent) are discontented with military agencies and say that it is hard for them to get access to related information from those agencies. Another half of respondents in Kabul complain about difficulty in accessing legal and judicial information. Over half of the responding journalists in Herat and Nangarhar complain about difficulty in getting access to military information. Less than half of the respondents in Kandahar report that they cannot get timely access to military information.

However, every three out of four responding journalists in Balkh province report difficulty in getting access to legal and judicial information. Whereas, one out of every four respondents in Balkh report difficulty in accessing military information.

Meanwhile, journalists in Balkh report no problems in accessing economic and human rights information.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Journalists in Kandahar also report no problems in getting access to economic information.

The survey also asked about the time that it takes a journalist to get access to their required information.

Over half of the respondents (64.53 percent) report that it takes them more than one day to get access to the legal and judicial information they ask for. Only seven percent of respondents say that they get access to legal and judicial information in an hour.

The survey also reveals that information related to military issues takes much longer to reach journalists. Nearly half of the responding journalists (44 percent) report that it takes them longer than one day to get access to military information. However, over half of the respondents say that their request information on military issues reach them within one to three hours.

Journalists also face delays in getting access to human rights information. More than 35 percent of respondents say that they receive information related to human rights issues in one or more than one day in delay. Meanwhile 39 percent of respondents report that they get access to human rights information after one hour time.

Journalists get access to economic information more quickly than other information. More than half of the respondents (58 percent) say that they receive economic information within one to three hours after they ask for them. Meanwhile 36 percent of the respondents say that they get access to their economic information of interest after one or more than one day delay.

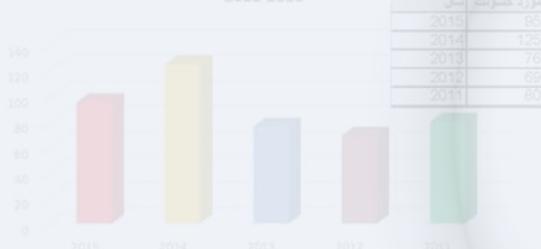
Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan shared with media the findings of their survey in a press conference. Siddiquallah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch said in the press conference: "Delays occurring in disclosing of information to journalists, including hiding information from journalists, creates problems. This will let propaganda against state fill the void undermining people's trust in the State and widening the gap between them."

Mr. Tuwhidi also said: "Although state officials are obliged by the Constitution, Mass Media Law and recently approved Access to Information Act, to share information with citizens who ask for them, journalists are still denied access to information."

Director of Media Watch added that unfortunately some state officials still consider themselves as the principle owners of information. They consider it within their own authority to choose to either share or withhold information with citizens. However, the real owner of information are the people of Afghanistan. The Access to Information Act explicitly outlines the types of state's secret information that should not be disclosed and journalists are well aware of that.

Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan calls upon the leadership of the National Unity Government to pay serious attention on implementation of the Access to Information Act and order to refer to the legal and judicial organs those state officials who break the law and withhold information.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Media Watch believes that facilitation in access to information can help the government and people of Afghanistan in combating corruption and limit wasting of public assets to a certain extent. Therefore, the National Unity Government is obliged to take any measure necessary to implement Access to Information Act and pave the way for reform in the state administration.

Governors of Bamyan and Daikundi provinces restricted access to information

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan has gained access to evidence showing that Governor of Daikundi has ordered local state institutions in Daikundi, that prior to any interview with media, they should first arrange it with the office of the governor on the issue and topic of their interviews.

The Governor of Daikundi issued Letter 21, dated December 14, 2015, to all local administration offices in Daikundi ordering them: "Officials should avoid disclosing of any unconfirmed information without previously informing and coordinating with the Governor about it."

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan considers the Governor's order in violation with the Constitution of Afghanistan, in particular Articles 34 and 50. Siddiqullah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch says that creating any obstacles on the way of open circulation of information in Afghanistan is unlawful. Regardless of who imposes such obstacles, the governors or the central government administration, they are considered in violation of Afghanistan laws.

Media Watch Director says: "Except the restrictions mentioned in the law, no one else has the right to impose further restrictions on access to information. Therefore, we demand from the government to clear the path of access to information from any unlawful obstacles."

In a separate development, journalists in Bamyan have contacted Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan and reported that the Governor of Bamyan, Mr. Zaheer, has pressed and threatened those journalists who produce critical reports and write about corruption and breaking of the rules by state officials.

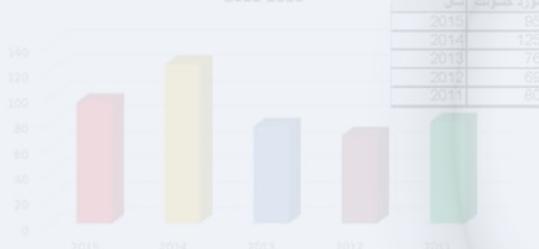
These journalists report that Governor of Bamyan is particularly sensitive to critical reports, calls the writers of such reports to his office, presses and threatens them in an effort to stop them from producing such reports again.

A Bamyan-based journalist, who wanted Media Watch not to disclose his name, said: "Whenever journalists publishes a critical report about Bamyan officials, Governor of Bamyan calls them to his office, uses his authority to press and threaten them so that they do not publish any critical reports in the future."

The journalist also says that Governor of Bamyan tries to divide journalists in an attempt to restrict the ground for publishing of critical reports.

Media Watch tried to talk to Governor of Bamyan about this issue, but despite several attempts it did not succeed in having his stance on the issue.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Siddiqullah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, says that journalists have the right to interview whoever they may need to. This can allow them to find out and publish about shortcomings and breaking of rules in state administration offices. Neither the governor nor any other state officials have the right to press or condemn journalists for their publishing of critical reports - which is their job.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan believes that creating any obstacle on the path of open circulation of information is unlawful. Perpetrators of such actions are clearly violating the rule of law and should be legally chased.

Access to information is one of the most basic rights of citizens of Afghanistan and the Constitution of the country respects it. Therefore, no one, including state authorities are allowed to restrict it.

Media Watch calls upon the National Unity Government to prevent local officials from restricting open circulation of information and protect rule of law in the country.

The Constitution of the country obliges the State of Afghanistan to protect freedom of speech and facilitate access to information.

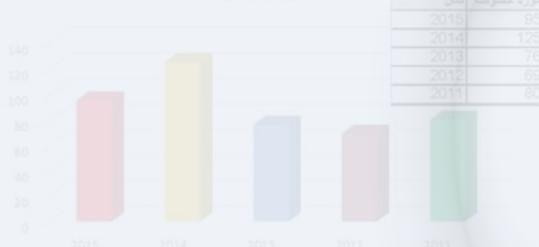
Nai Office concerned about recent assassination attempts on journalists and media activists in Kabul

Seven armed attacks and assassination attempts targeted journalists and media activists in Kabul in less than a month period. This has left media community of Afghanistan in sorrow and concern.

In the first attempt last month, a mine which was placed in the vehicle of Mr. Siddiqullah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch, exploded and sat his car in fire. Fortunately Mr. Tuwhidi was not in his car at the time of explosion and remained unhurt. Several days later, another armed attack targeted Mr. Salem Wahdat, director of Bokhdi News Agency. He escaped the attack but his company was seriously injured in the attack. Another armed attack targeted Amhad Saeedi, a media activist and critic of the government. Mr. Saeedi was critically injured in the attack and after treatment abroad, he returned to the country. Next in a deadly attack, Amanullah Attayi, director of Asia private TV station, was assassinated in Kabul. Although police arrested two suspects in connection with the attack and later announced that the attack was motivated by personal conflicts, Mr. Aattayi's family rejected allegations that he might have had any personal animosity with anyone. Another armed attack targeted Helai Ershad, a member of the House of Representatives, but fortunately she survived. And finally two attacks targeted two media activists and criticizers of the state in the same night. The first one targeted Jawed Kohistani, an analyst of military affairs and a critic of the government administration. Unidentified armed men stormed Mr. Kohistani's house in Kabul, but fortunately did not succeed in hurting him or his family. Another armed attack on the same night targeted Toofan Waziri, a media activist and critic of the government. Fortunately Mr. Waziri was not harmed in the attack.

Speaking in a press conference, Abdulmujeeb Khalwatgar, executive director of Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan expressed his concerns about the seven attacks on journalists and media activists in less than a month time. Mr. Khalwatgar

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

said: "Protecting people's lives, particularly those of journalists and media activists, is one of the main duties of the security institutions. When in less than a month time, seven attacks targets journalists and media activists in the heart of Kabul City, this shows a clear shortcoming on behalf of security institutions."

Executive director of Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan also added: "The State of Afghanistan should clearly state to the people of Afghanistan that the reason why these journalists and media activists have been attacked on are not their criticism of the government and that they have not been attacked by the government. Otherwise, multiple speculations exist that such attacks may have been carried out by a number of officials, speculated as the fifth column, from inside the political system."

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan calls upon the National Unity Government to prevent any attempts targeting media activists and staffs and creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan also demands from the National Security Directorate and the Interior Ministry of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to use all what it takes to put an end to the atmosphere of fear and intimidation that the recent attacks on media activists and journalists have created. Afghanistan security forces have a legal and conscientious duty to protect the lives of all citizens, particularly those of the journalists and media activists. If they do not fulfil their duties, then they have committed legal violations and those of conscientious magnitude.

On the other hand, as it appears, all those targeted in these assassination attempts are either critics of the government or of Pakistan's foreign policy towards Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan is obliged to prove that the reason behind such attacks have not been the victims' criticism of the government. And in order for the culture of criticism to grow and expand, the government should put in its priority list protection of critics of its policies and actions. Meanwhile the government should also protect the lives of all its citizens, including those of the journalists and media staffs against any possible foreign plots.

Assassination attempt on Chakaad-local-TV journalist in Herat province

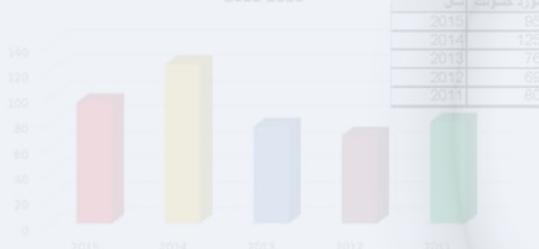
Salim Moqimi, a journalist for Chakaad local TV channel in Herat province, claims that unidentified armed individuals have beaten and stabbed him in the vicinity of Herat city in the evening of December 19, 2015.

In a phone conversation with Media Watch, Mr. Moqimi said that in the evening of December 19, 2015, he left office for home as in every other work day. On the way home, several armed motorcyclists stopped him, next beat him, and then one of the attackers injured him with his knife.

Mr. Moqimi described the incidence as following: "It was 6:00 PM and I was on my way home when three motorcyclists stopped me. They pulled out their guns and began to beat me with them. Then they asked me to get off my motorcycle which I refused. Finally one of them stabbed me with his knife and they immediately fled the scene."

Mr. Moqimi also said that there was no one else in the place where the attackers stopped and beat him and so nobody heard his screams to stop by and help him.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Mr. Moqimi has picked up a deep wound in his arm during the attack. He said that he runs political programs in Chakaad local TV channel and is not sure whether the attackers intended to take his life. "I do not know what their intention was; God had mercy on me so that the knife did not hit in my heart; if it did, I was no more."

On the other hand, Rahim Panjshiri, director of criminal investigations at Herat Police Headquarters told Media Watch in a phone conversation that he did not have any information about the incident.

Mr. Panjshiri said: "Nobody visited or reported about this incident to us. I just learned about it now and immediately tasked the relevant district's police chief and criminal investigation chief to follow up the incident."

Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan expresses its concerns about the attack on this journalist in Herat city. It further raises its concerns over police's lack of information about the incident.

Police is obliged to identify and arrest perpetrators of violence against all citizens and in particular against journalists. Police's lack of attention on protection of journalists and media staffs perpetuates and leads to more violence against journalists. Media Watch demands officials' attention and action regarding this matter.

Leaving perpetrators of violence against journalists unpunished in recent years has contributed to a flawed culture of neglect within the State of Afghanistan which has imposed man problems on the people of Afghanistan.

Daesh (ISIS) launched their so-called 'Voice of the Caliphate' Radio broadcast in eastern Afghanistan

The terrorist group, Daesh (=ISIS) has launched a radio channel called "The Voice of the Caliphate" in eastern Afghanistan. The waves of this radio channel can reach Jalalabad City and several districts of Nangarhar province. They spread massive propaganda against the people and State of Afghanistan. Residents of Jalalabad say that the radio's broadcast has periodically been accessible since December 17, 2015. They invite youth to join Daesh group.

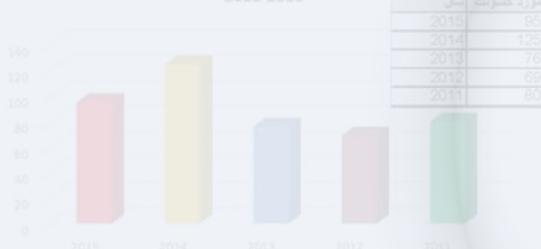
In a press release, Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan called abusing of freedom of speech to promote terrorist causes as unacceptable. Nai believes that launching media outlets that promote terrorist goals and spread hatred are in violation with effective laws of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and calls upon the Government of Afghanistan to use all its technical and intelligence resources to stop this illegal radio channel from broadcasting.

Abdulmujeeb Khalwatgar, executive director of Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan said: "The Government of Afghanistan is obliged to seriously implement laws of the country and stop as soon as possible the broadcast of Radio Voice of the Caliphate, which is illegally launched by Daesh and is promoting hatred to reach its terrorist goals."

After too many voices raised against launching of the so-called Radio Voice of the Caliphate, authorities in Nangarhar province claimed that they have stopped the radio's broadcasting and that they were trying to arrest those who launched it.

Attallah Khogiani, spokesperson for Nangarhar Governor Office, claimed in an interview with Media Watch that they have stopped broadcast of Radio Voice of the Caliphate one week after it was launched. He said that the mentioned radio channel does not have any broadcasts in Nangarhar province anymore.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Mr. Khogiani said: "We are trying to find the station and arrest the staffs of this so-called Radio Voice of the Caliphate."

The spokesperson for Nangarhar Governor Office believes that Radio Voice of the Caliphate was broadcasting as a mobile station on both sides of the Durand Border Line.

However, nearly a month after the radio channel started its broadcasts, and contrary to the claims made by Nangarhar authorities that they have stopped the radio from broadcasting, residents of Jalalabad city and villages across Nangarhar province say that the voice of this radio's broadcasts can still be heard periodically. They constantly invite youth to join Daesh terrorist group.

A resident of Jalalabad city, who chose to remain anonymous, told Media Watch that sometimes they listened to this radio broadcasts which spread propaganda against the State. "Three days ago, I listened to this radio at 7:00 PM. They usually broadcast [propaganda] songs and short messages through which they express their goals."

Meanwhile there are reports that this radio spreads propaganda against open media in Afghanistan and threatens journalists to death. Journalists in eastern zone of the country express their concerns about these threats.

Sidiqullah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, said in a press conference: "Continuation of this radio's broadcasts has created concerns and anxiety among citizens and journalists."

Mr. Tuwhidi also added: "Continuation of broadcasting activities of Radio Voice of the Caliphate has created worries in the minds of the public in eastern Afghanistan. In their radio broadcasting programs, they directly threaten journalists and open media in Afghanistan. If the government does not stop them, continuation of their broadcasts will affect the effective and good works of our colleagues in eastern zone of the country."

Director of Media Watch said that no terrorist group has the right to exploit freedom of speech that is enshrined in the Constitution of Afghanistan. He also added that stopping this radio channel from broadcasting is not a difficult task. He demanded that the government should stop this radio channel from broadcasting and put an end to citizens' concerns as soon as possible.

Siddiqullah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch, also said: "Freedom of speech and freedom of thought are the right of each and every citizen of Afghanistan who obey the Constitution and other laws of the country. None of those who kill people and burn and loathe their houses are ever entitled to these rights, let alone exploiting and abusing such rights toward encouraging war and violence among people."

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan believes that based on Article 34 of the Constitution, the State of Afghanistan is obliged to protect freedom of speech. Therefore, Media Watch calls upon the government that based on the mentioned article of the Constitution, to use all its means to stop broadcasting of this radio channel and assure Afghanistan people, particularly those in eastern parts of the country, that no individual or group can spread their anti-humanistic beliefs.

Launching of this radio channel or any other media outlet by terrorists and enemies of humanity can seriously hurt freedom of speech in the country and reduce people's trust in the State.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan calls once more upon the State of Afghanistan to be sensitive to such developments, and do not allow terrorist groups to exploit the freedom of media to recruit youth and to broadcast negative propaganda against the people and the political system of Afghanistan.

Inattention to this important issue, in one hand can bring the sovereignty of the State of Afghanistan under question, and on the other hand, can spread hatred among one group of citizens against another.

A Noor-TV journalist claimed to have been beaten by Kabul Police

Kabul Police forces beat Sayed Enaam Salehi, a journalist for Noor TV station. Mr. Salehi's family lives in Takhaar province. He works in Kabul and lives in an apartment that he has jointly rented with one of his friends.

Mr. Salehi contacted Media Watch and claimed that in the evening of December 12, 2015, unidentified persons, two of which were dressed in military uniforms, entered his room, located in a neighborhood in 3rd District of Kabul City, beat him and destroyed all his equipment in his apartment.

Mr. Salehi added: "Tonight at 9:10 PM, several unknown people entered my room, beat me, and then broke whatever equipment they found."

Mr. Salehi has no idea about any possible reason for storming of armed people, dressed both as civilians and in military uniforms, beating and insulting him."

However, Abdulbasir Mojahed, spokesperson for Kabul Police Headquarters, told Media Watch in interview that the incident was a misunderstanding by police forces.

Mr. Mojahed continued: "Police entered the apartment of this journalist by a mistake. Eventually, the real target was somewhere else."

Mr. Mojahed said that they have reacted an understanding with the affected journalist and solved the problem. He also added: "I spoke with the journalist. The incident took place by mistake. The problem is solved now."

Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan strongly condemns any unlawful behavior towards the country's citizens, in particular towards journalists, which violates their human dignity. Continuation of such behaviors will harm the wellbeing of the society and the image of the State.

Media Watch demands that officials at the Ministry of Interior of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan act in accordance with law, arrest and punish the perpetrators, and assure journalists and the rest of Afghanistan citizens that such acts of violence will not repeat again.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

Journalists complained about inappropriate behavior of deputy director for Protocol Division of the President's Office during the President's visit in Europe

President Ashraf Ghani was accompanied by a group of journalists in his visit to Europe to participate in Paris Climate Change Conference 2015. The journalists were covering President's visit moment-by-moment. A number of these journalists complained about the behavior of the deputy director for Protocol Division of the President's Office.

One of the accompanying journalists, Shakila Ibrahimkhel, shared with Media Watch her eye-witnessed accounts of the inappropriate and even insulting behavior of some of the Protocol Division of the President's Office staffs: "The staffs of the Protocol Division of the President's Office behaved inappropriately with journalists. Although similar behaviors have existed in previous trips, this time they happened more frequently than any other time in the past."

Ms. Ibrahimkhel continued: "Among the staffs of the Protocol Division of the President's Office, there was a madam who thought she knew everything because she was raised abroad and that those who have come from Afghanistan knew nothing. Her behavior towards journalists was very inappropriate and journalists' problems were never paid attention to."

Sayed Zafar Hashemi, depute spokesperson for the office of the President, told Media Watch that he was in contact with all journalists who accompanied the President in his trip to Europe. He said he is facilitating for a face-to-face meeting of those journalists with the deputy director for Protocol Division of the President's Office to solve their problems.

Abdulmujeeb Khalwatgar, executive director of Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, demanded the President that allowances for journalists who take part in such trips should be equally divided among all journalists without any distinctions among state vis-à-vis free journalists. Double standard and discrimination towards journalists can fuel the speculation that the Government of Afghanistan does not support free media.

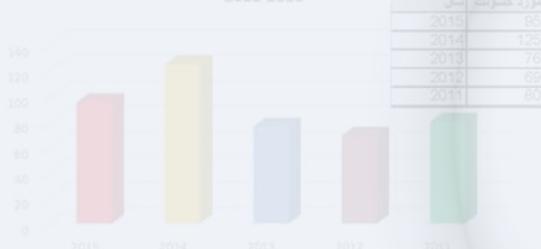
Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan strongly condemns insulting of journalists by the State authorities and considers them in violation with the effective laws of the country. Media Watch calls once more upon the staffs of the President's Office to behave with journalists appropriately and in accordance with laws. This should be strictly followed in trips abroad when a group of journalists accompany the President for in-time reporting of his visits. Staffs of the President's Office are obliged to provide a conducive environment for the journalists so that the latter can report President's visits and achievements in a timely fashion.

The Media Complaints and Violation Investigations Commission formed

After amendments to the Mass Media Law which were approved by the National Assembly and signed into law by the President, and several months after the law took effect, the Media Complaints and Violation Investigations Commission was formed in the Ministry of Information and Culture.

The Commission is composed of ten members from various governmental and non-governmental organizations including Ministry of Information and Culture, Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, Afghanistan's National Journalists Union, Afghanistan's Journalists Council, Journalism Department of Kabul University, Independent Human Rights Com-

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

mission, Civil Society Institutions, Afghanistan's Council of Ulema, and Afghanistan Filmmakers Union.

Siddiqullah Tuwhidi, director of Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan and a member of the Commission, said that the Commission approved its working procedures in the first step. The procedures determines the ways in which media and journalists can file their complaints as well as criteria based on which the Commission will investigate the filed complaints.

Mr. Tuwhidi also added that they will pay attention to Mass Media Law, Access to Information Act, and Copy Right Act for investigation of complaints filed against journalists and media.

Director of Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan says that the Commission has investigated 19 cases and referred them to the relevant organs in the last three months. He also added that in most of the cases the opposite side has been given the right to respond. Mr. Tuwhidi further continued: "We are hopeful that the Commission can investigate cases involving media and journalists before they are referred to the Office of Attorney General or the courts."

Mr. Tuwhidi asked all journalists and media consumers to direct their complaints to this Commission. After their investigations, no plaintiff will lose their right of claim, but the complaints should be credible.

According to the new Mass Media Law, the Commission will be chaired by the Minister of Information and Culture.

Media Watch at Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan believes that formation of the Media Complaints and Violation Investigations Commission which is based on the Mass Media Law will benefit freedom of speech, media and journalists. Media Watch calls upon the Commission to investigate complaints filed against journalists only with relying on the effective laws of the country. The Commission should not allow any individuals who are against freedom of speech to use state resources and act against media and freedom of speech.

Konjkaw publication joined media family

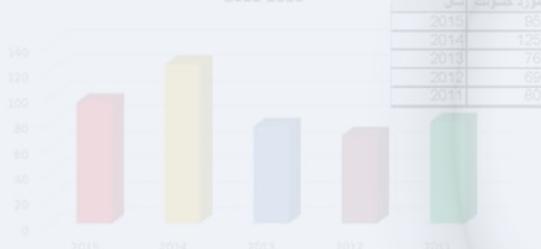
Konjkaw weekly recently joined the press family in the country. It is published in Kapisa province. Muniburrahman, chief editor of Konjkaw described to Media Watch the goal of this weekly as following: "We focus on research and social issues in this weekly. It reflects the voice of people and the problems that they face."

Konjkaw weekly was published in four pages. There are 12 staff writers working in Konjkaw. The weekly printing cost of Konjkaw weekly amounts to AFS 4,000. The chief editor of Konjkaw is trying to also publish his weekly in other provinces. "Currently it is only published in Kapisa and we are trying to also publish it in other provinces," said Konjkaw chief editor.

According to Mr. Muniburrahman, governmental officials in Kapisa province do not talk to media and this creates problems for Kapisa journalists in getting access to the information they need.

Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan welcomes publishing of Konjkaw weekly and believes that it is another step towards media pluralism in the country. Media Watch calls upon cultural organizations and local businesspeople

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

in Kapisa to help financing Konjkaw weekly so that it can sustain and contribute to the open circulation of information across the country.

Violations against journalists in Afghanistan
2011-2015





نی حمایت کننده رسانه های آزاد افغانستان
Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

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 .

For more information on Media Watch project please contact our team at:

Mohammad Saber Fahim

Media Watch Senior reporter

Cell# +93 (0) 700-266-727 saber.fahim@nai.org.af - saberf4@gmail.com

Nawid Mohammadi

Media Watch reporter

Cell# +93 (0) 787159022 nawid.mohammadi@nai.org.af - nawidmohammadi88@gmail.com

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

Note:

1. To maintain confidentiality and to protect sources it was not possible for Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan to corroborate the incidents by carrying out additional investigations.

Copy right is reserved for Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan