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Media Watch Report

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Media Watch Report

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

- Kabul bloody attack and martyrdom of four media staff and vanishing of a reporter.
- Terrorist attack on national broadcaster RTA in Nangarhar and martyrdom of its four employees.
- Murder of a Pesh-kost correspondent in Baghlan province.
- Assault on journalist in Nangarhar.
- ISIS radio destroyed for the second time in Nangarhar.
- Assault on a local radio journalist in Herat.
- Threatening of a journalist in Kunduz province.
- Nai Survey Findings: 9 out of 10 journalist do not have access to information.
- Government is not doing enough on violence against journalist cases
- Hekmatyar's remarks against the media deemed unlawful and unreligious.
- CEO: Religion should not be used as the grounds to deny freedom of speech.
- Users unsatisfied with internet services, speed and cost.





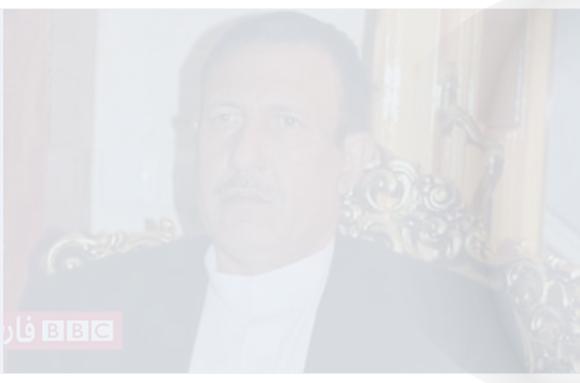
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May ended as the bloodiest month till date, for the media in Afghanistan. During this month, two bloody terrorist incidents occurred in Jalalabad and Kabul where a total of 8 media workers were martyred, and at least 18 others were injured. After the Kabul incident, a local journalist in Kabul vanished on his way to work, and colleagues and family searched nearby hospitals but could not find him. In this significant terrorist event in Kabul, which occurred on May 31, sources say about 100 residents have been killed and more than 400 injured. However, there is still no official and independent source to state the exact casualty figures. The building of the national television broadcaster RTA in Jalalabad was also hit by a suicide attack that have killed 4 media staff and one guard, while several others were injured. The building was also thought to have been damaged.

A journalist of Pesh-kost was also killed by fired bullets in Pul-e-Khomri, and nobody has been arrested or identified in connection with the case. During this same month of May, three cases of physical assaults on journalist by police offers in Nangarhar province were recorded by Nai Media Watch. Another journalist was also hit by police in Herat province, while traveling to work there during the visit of CEO Dr. Abdullah Abdullah.

As an aside, Islamic party leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, on his return to Kabul confronted the press and mocked them in insulting language. The actions of Hekmatyar were strongly condemned by freedom of speech defenders.

During this month, Nai presented the results of two surveys – the first about internet and internet services, and the second about access to information. Both surveys showed that journalist and citizens are annoyed about the situation. Internet users complained about the speed of internet and the high cost, while nine out of ten journalist revealed that they face problems while accessing information.





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Four journalist and media employees martyred in Kabul bloody attack

On Wednesday May 31st, residents of Kabul experienced a bloody black day, as terrorists launched a brutal attack, which spread deep grief and sorrow into hundreds of Kabuli families. In this significant terrorist incident that struck at the heart of the diplomatic quarter, more than a hundred people lost their lives and a further 400 were wounded, some critically. The number of fatalities keeps increasing by the day.

Afghan media also suffered along with Afghan people. The three of its members who were martyred were from BBC, TOLO and the national television RTA. They were: Nazir Ahmad, a BBC driver, Aziz Naween, information technology section employee of TOLO TV, and one unnamed employee of RTA.

Habibullah Husain Zada, who has worked as a cameraman at Press TV, who vanished without a trace since the attack, was only identified a week later when his corpse was located from one of the hospitals bearing his reporter's ID card.

Five other BBC journalist, four TOLO TV employees, five journalist of 1TV, three employees of RTA, one journalist of Pajhwok News Agency, and one journalist of Ariana TV were also injured.

However, most of the injuries sustained were minor and most have been released from hospital. In addition to the injuries and deaths, 1TV network, which is located near the site of the blast, suffered the most damage, with most of the building destroyed.

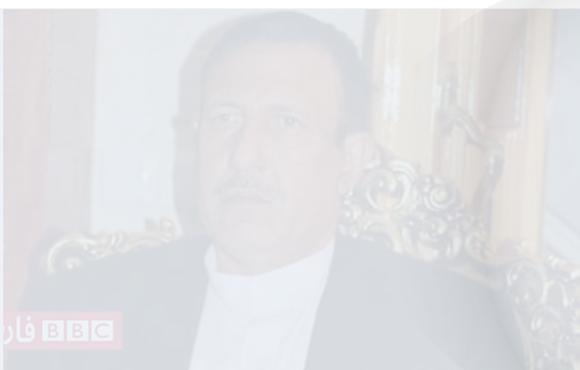
Nai, the organisation that supports freedom of the media, apart from condemning the agents of the bloody incident, want the government to provide emergency support to the families of the victims.

Nai believes that the media in Afghanistan will never forget the perpetrators of this violence, and will forever save them for posterity by the way of publications – depicting them as blood-thirsty individuals.

Soon after the incident, news of the media staff that were killed was published. The team from Nai Media Watch hurried to the scene to provide assistance to the vulnerable. Journalist from far and wide arrived to cover the aftermath, and inform citizens accordingly. Their presence at this place was not free from hazard, but the media has accepted this danger in order to be witnesses and carry out their obligation to collect and provide information to the public. The experience has shown that, journalist in addition to accepting danger by going into this area, had to also contend with brutalities from security forces, as we were also witness of security forces' violence against journalist during the recent incident.

Ehsanullah Sediqi, Farhat News Agency chairman, while taking picture of the scene was beaten up by a police officer.

Mr. Sediqi, in an interview with Nai Media Watch complained about the inhumane and unlawful treatment suffered at the hands of the police, saying: "Despite one and a half decade of a new regime of freedom in Afghanistan, the police still doesn't know the obligation of journalist ." He insisted that these acts of threat-





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ening and hitting journalist should be punishable, according to the law.

But a police officer, who was also present at the scene, excused this behavior of the police, as they needed the journalist to go away from the area for their own safety.

Nai Media Watch want the security authorities to know that even in the event of terrorist incidents, journalist do accept the dangers and obligate themselves to collect information for dissemination. Hence, they should provide support to them according to the law, and furnish journalist and photographers with an appropriate and secure place to conduct interviews and produce reports.

Nai Media Watch considers this Kabul terrorist attack to be a human tragedy of epic proportions, and want both national and international organizations to count the agents of this act among war offenders.

Terrorist attack on national broadcaster RTA in Nangarhar, and martyrdom of its four employees

On the morning of Wednesday morning May 17th, a group of suicide attackers, which formal sources say numbered three, attacked the office of the national broadcaster RTA in Jalalabad City of Nangarhar province. What ensued was four hours of shoot out between them and security forces.

In the aftermath, five people were martyred, with four of them being civilian employees of the station, and the fifth was a guard.

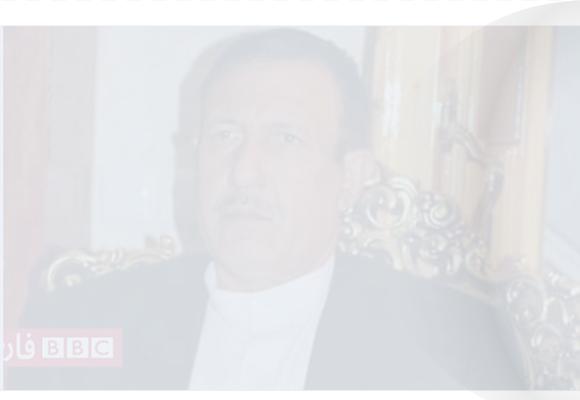
They were: Mohammad Amir, a member of the TV technical department, Zainullah and Abdul Latif, who worked as warehouse keepers, and Abdul Ghani who was a service employee.

Members of Nai Media Watch, who visited the scene of the incident to conduct an investigation, also paid a visit to the families of the victims and expressed their condolences. These victims and their families were some of the most vulnerable and needy, living in the villages surrounding Jalalabad, and dependent on the meager government salary as their sole source of income.

Bakhtiyar, a brother of one of the victims, who is himself an employee of RTA in a discussion with Nai during the visit, complained about the government not prioritizing the protection and security of the employees of the TV station, noting: “A week ago, the station was threatened by terrorists, but security authorities neglected to make the connection with this current attack.”

He also claimed further: “When you look at the attendance sheets of the station, you will see that the high-ranking employees did not show up to work for the whole week since the threat, but ordinary employees could not afford to be absent.” He noted that he was a mere 10 meters away from his brother Abdul Ghani, so saw the terrorists enter and one of them killed him with an AK 47.

Wahdat, is the oldest son of one of the deceased Abdul Latif, and lives in a poor state in one of the villages.





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He said: “My old, white bearded father who could not speak well was killed trying to earn an income for the family.” He noted that the government must pay his father’s pension on time so his mother and younger siblings can continue with their lives.

The families of the other victims all denounced the brute manner in which their relatives were killed, noting that the terrorists shot them in their faces and heads.

Sources say that the ISIS group has since claimed responsibility for the attack.

About 20 others were injured in this incident, some were treated for trauma and sent back home but others are still receiving treatment. One of them lost his foot, and his brothers are concerned about his future.

Despite repeated attempts, the Nai team was unable to interview the head of the station with regards to the incident and the threats received before it. However, documents shared with Nai show that on May 8, 2017, the Police Headquarters in Nangarhar dispatched a letter indicating threats on the national TV, Nangarhar Court, and the Nangarhar Prison. The letter indicated that the ISIS plans to strike at these places before the start of Ramadan.

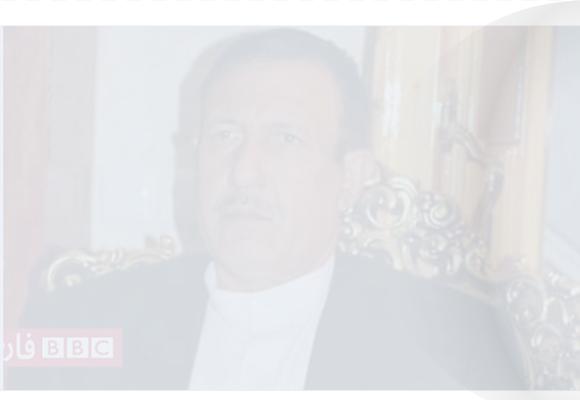
Responding to this letter the office of the Governor of Nangarhar, wrote: “Observed, the information should be announce through written format to the security organizations, so they do their efforts in this regard. Then chief of staff department of governor house wrote (to the related security organizations); that according to the directive you perform from your won end.

Hazrat Husain Mashrqi wal, the spokesperson of the Nangarhar police headquarters in an interview with Nai said, “The threat was not just against the national TV, but also other governmental and non-governmental agencies, and the security forces were able to prevent more of them.”

He noted further: “We have high security arrangements for all the organizations we received the threat against, but it was so difficult to prevent the attack against the station.”

According to international laws, attacks aimed at public places and other non-military bases are war crimes, and Nai wants the international community and human rights defenders to consider this incident as such.

Nai also want the National Unity Government (NUG) to try its best to identify and arrest the elements behind the attack, in order to prevent more of such attempts against vulnerable groups such as media workers and journalist .





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Expert journalist murdered in Baghlan

Asadullah Kohzad, a former international correspondent (including recently in the Dari service of Radio France) who is now working as a freelance reporter, and also a civil society activist in Baghlan province, was killed by unknown gunmen near his home on the morning of Sunday May 7th.

He was one of chief opponents of terrorism in Baghlan province. He always criticized government not doing required actions against terrorism in the province.

Abdul Latif Pedram, the leader of the National Congress Party, published the announcement of his demise on Facebook, noting that Asadullah Kohzad was a party executive member, and denounced his killing, calling the perpetrators enemies of humanity, freedom and tribal justice.

In this announcement, he mentioned that Mr. Kohzad recently held a ceremony in Pul-e-Khumri city about the necessity of the Afghan government to define Deu-rand border.

Najib Danesh, Ministry of Interior spokesperson in an interview with Nai Media Watch said: “Police investigation into this case has already commenced but we are yet to find any source of the attack. Once we find anything, we will inform the media accordingly.”

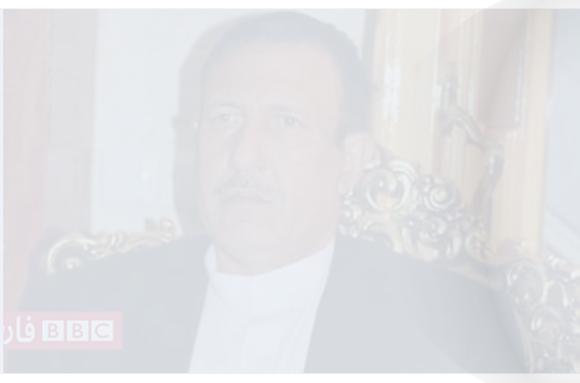
The day after this incident, Nai published a press release expressing grief, and called on the government to identify the attackers and bring them to justice. They also asked government to ensure the safety of the Afghan people, and to thwart the efforts of the enemies of the government and the people.

Nai declared the death of Mr. Kohzad as a serious loss, noting that such terrors threaten the lives of the people and government.

When the NUG fails to identify and prosecute the killers, the gap between them and the people will increase further and the fragile trust will be damaged even further.

Three journalist verbally assaulted and threatened by the police

Norrullah Sherzad and Anwar Daneshyar, a journalist and photographer of France Press News Agency respectively, and Parwiz Romal, a journalist of Roystarz are active media persons in Eastern Afghanistan. These three journalist have been in contact with Nai Media Watch to report that they were verbally assaulted and threatened by some national security personnel. Norrullah Sherzad says: “On Monday May 22, I together with two other journalist had gone to Surkh-Rud district to report on a story, and while returning, at the Narang-bagh area, security officers had put a checkpoint and made us get out of the car where we were body-searched. While this was going on, a tinted bulletproof car went by us without being stopped. I, as a responsible citizen pointed to them that they need to also stop and search this particular car, but that was





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when they commenced hitting and physically assaulting us.”

Norrullah continued: “This national security officer repeatedly told us that we journalist are always causing problems for them, and trampled on our helmet that had the “press” emblem on it.

Parwiz Romal, also said: “Then another officer, apparently high ranking, who was watching the attack on us from afar came up to us and enquired about what was going on. When he recognized that we were actually journalist, instead of coming to our aid, he gave orders for us to be made to sit on the ground.”

According to Parwiz, Jalalabad’s Security Department head while having that trespasser soldier along with himself, at Nangarhar province press office in presence a number of journalist insisted that will consign the trespasser soldier to the law claw.

Authorities from the Nangarhar national security office who do not want to be named informed Nai Media Watch that the authorities, including the governor have met at the provincial press office in order to solve the issue. This gives us confidence that the accused security officer will be duly prosecuted, in addition to apologizing to the victims.

Nai Media Watch considers such verbal attacks and threats against journalist to be illegal, and want the authorities in Nangarhar to bring such perpetrators to justice.

Misconduct, insult and violence cases against journalist are not to be solved by apologizing or resorting to the elders or other traditional ways. The proper thing to do is to have them face the law according to the constitution of Afghanistan.

ISIS radio destroyed once again in Nangarhar

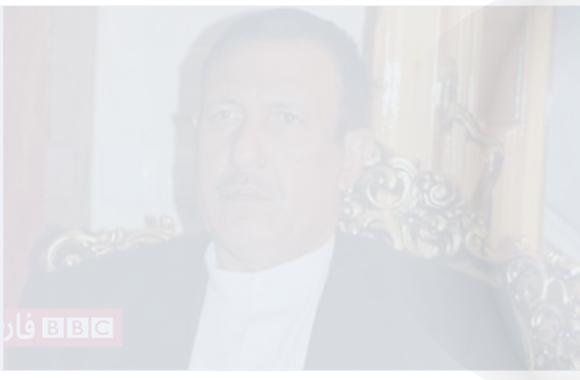
A day after the killing of Abdul Haseeb, a leader of the ISIS group and some of its commanders in Nangarhar province, Interior ministry said that a radio transmitter belonging to the group destroying while 34 members of ISIS were killed in Nangarhar province.

A joint statement from both American and Afghan Special Forces indicated that some 50 US forces and 40 Afghan forces personnel were involved in the raid on Abdul Haseeb’s area.

The Interior Ministry noted in its press statement said that it had also raided several of the ISIS hideaways in parts of Nazeeyan and Achin districts of the province, and as a result, the radio transmitter and other technical equipment was destroyed and the 34 fighters were killed.

Najib Danesh, the spokesperson of the ministry in an interview with Nai Media Watch said: “This operation was undertaken by Afghan air and land forces, and the ISIS radio which was destroyed had broadcast messages against the people and government of Afghanistan.”

He said further that the radio was mobile and not fixed at one spot but rather attached to a car which broadcasts from various locations on both sides of the border, which made it difficult to locate its exact position





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at any particular time.

The ISIS Radio, which was named the Voice of the Caliphate and broadcasts on 90 FM wave was used to invite fighters to join the ISIS cause.

Residents of Jalalabad said: “This Radio was heard in Jalalabad and other districts of Nangarhar and ISIS members were using it to issue threats and sanctions against the people and to insult the Afghan government, as well as to invite the young ones to join them.” They noted that the radio was only used to spread mischief and had no other use.

This radio had been destroyed once before, during a raid by the international forces on 03-02-2016 during which 29 of its members were killed.

The radio broadcasts not only in Dari and Pashto, but also in the English language.

Assault on a local radio journalist in Herat

Mohammad Ahmadi, is a news manager of Meraj Radio in Herat province. He contacted Nai Media Watch to report that he was assaulted by a security officer. He said that on Tuesday May 16th, CEO Abdullah had gone to Herat for a visit and the roads were blocked to make way for him. Early in the morning of that day, he was on his way to the office which was about 100 meters from where the temporary security block was placed, and he was prevented from going through.

He narrated further that, some were allowed through but only after mediation by the Police, but he was prevented even after showing his journalist ID card. “When I became sure that they wouldn’t let me go through, I decided to turn back but one of the officers started to hit me from the back. They confiscated my motorcycle and interrogated me for 20 minutes” he said.

He said that he was only released after some other journalist came and intervened and he then proceeded to his office.

Nai Media Watch, despite several attempts was unable to speak to the Commander in Chief in Herat, about the incident. But according to sources from Meraj Radio, the commander has committed to fully investigating the case as soon as possible.

Nai maintains that no one should accept violence against journalist, and want the relevant authorities to identify the accused and ensure that justice is served.

Threatening of a journalist in Kunduz province

Zahir Niazi, an Arzoo TV journalist in Kunduz contacted Nai Media Watch to report that he had been physically and verbally assaulted by an employee of the department of education of the province.

Zahir said that on Thursday May 17th, students of a girls’ school protested against the Education depart-





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Nai supporting open Media in Afghanistan

ment, and he had gone to the area to interview some of the students and prepare a report about what was the reason for the protest. As he prepared to interview two of the students, suddenly, an employee of the department started raining insults on him, asking who gave him the right to photograph them.

Zahir, continued: “I tried reasoning with this education department employee that he cannot prevent me from fulfilling my obligation to cover the story, but when he found out that I was filming this exchange, he threatened to break my camera if I do not delete the video.”

Zahir, also indicted that the deputy supervisor of the education department threatened him and also said that his sister is the head of women’s affairs department of Kunduz province, so he can do whatever he likes.

Zahir then mentioned the issue on his Facebook page, writing: “The one who threatened me says he is the brother of the head of women’s affairs.” After the post was made, the accused person contacting him to apologize, saying he regrets his behaviour and that the post should be taken down.

Zahir said even though he accepted the apology and deleted his post, he received a phone call later that night from the head of the women’s affairs department who proceeded to insult him without listening to his side of the story.

He said further that he was phoned by the head of police that same night, who demanded that he delete the post.

General Abdul Hamid Hamidi, Kunduz head of police in an interview with Nai Media Watch said, he threatened nobody and the purpose of his call was to know what was the issue, with the agitation on Facebook. He said, “The reporter’s problem that he had with the deputy supervisor the education department is now solved.”

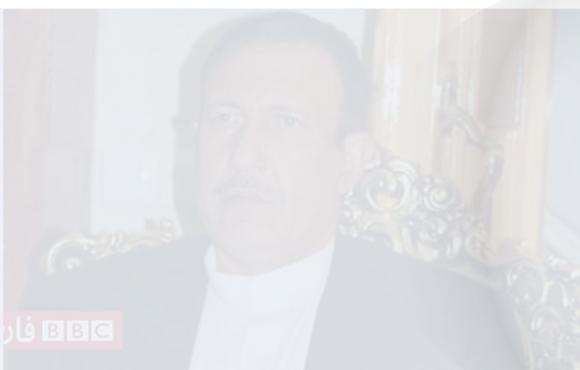
He claimed that he has always been a supporter of Journalists and media persons.

Nai accepts no kind of threats or insults against journalist , and want the security authorities to commit to solving any such incidents of violence against journalist through the lawful means.

Every Afghan citizen – be it a journalist or ordinary person – has the right to freedom of speech and to criticize any injustices, nepotism and breaking of the law and publish it openly on Facebook. The Kunduz head of police doesn’t have the right according to the Afghan constitution to ask someone about his Facebook post.

Nai Survey Findings: 9 out of 10 journalist do not have access to information

In a survey conducted by Nai Supporting Open Media in Afghanistan, it was revealed 90 percent of journalist have complained about difficulties with accessing information, and are very frustrated about the process. This one-month survey was conducted in 13 provinces including: Badakhshan, Bamyán, Baghlan, Faryab Ghazni, Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Laghman, Nangarhar and Takhar. A total of 180 journalist and media





workers (estimated to be 1.8 percent of media) took part in the survey.

The basic question was: do you ever face problem in accessing information, or not? Majority of journalist (90 percent) answered yes to the question.

The second question was: if your answer was positive, give three main problems with accessing information, where they were to write out their own experiences from the field.

Subterfuge, discrimination and threatening were 3 main problems that journalist indicated through the survey.

Other problems and challenges that journalist face when attempting to access information from government agencies include:

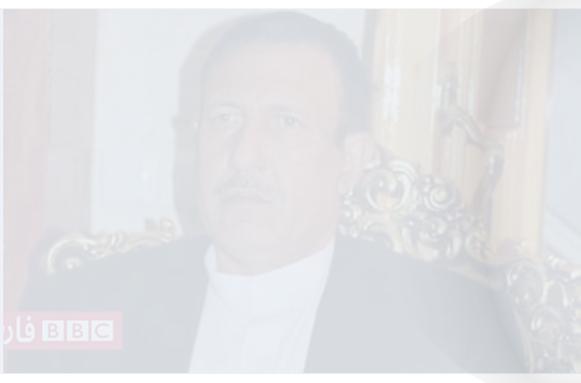
- Government authorities don't have enough familiarity with the access to information law (AIL), and so in the process of requesting for information, journalist have faced bad behaviour on the part of the officials, and some were even threatened.
- Some of the officials in charge consider government documents to be their private properties and refuse to share them with journalist .
- As far as government is concerned, only news conferences and press releases are considered access to information and prohibit officials from sharing information by other means.
- NUG, apart from enacting the law on access to information, has not performed any other other useful function, as far as they are concerned.
- Journalist are threatened while asking for information to produce an investigative report, the threats are increased whenever the report focused on corruption.
- Despite many presidential orders about facilitating access to information for journalist and citizens, some government agencies still want a formal letter from the journalist , despite the fact that the journalist make official requests to the designated departments assigned for providing information.
- Journalist are complaining on the process of access to information from the government that NUG ratified Access to Information Bill at its 2nd working day.

It is worth mentioning that journalist said they did not face as much problems in the former government, and even then their complaints were solved then.

Nai Media watch considers these findings to be particularly concerning, and wants the NUG to ensure that the Ail and all other laws are implemented fully without a defect.

Nai suggests the following to the NUG in order to address these concerns of journalist and media persons:

1. The government should clearly state its intention to provide access to information beyond news conferences and interviews.
2. The government should guarantee that they will institute an investigation into every threat made





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against a journalist during the course of accessing information.

3. The government should create a faster route to accessing information within a relatively shorter period of time.

4. The government and the various agencies should commit to investigation all incidents of violence against journalist that occur during the course of accessing information, and inform the media and the general public accordingly about the findings.

Government is not doing enough on violence against journalists' cases

National Unity Government, NUG proclaimed for the first time, that they have been working on the cases of violence against journalist and prosecuted those cases.

Nai Media Watch, in response announced its position in a news statement. Abdul Mujeeb Khalvatgar, the Executive Director of Nai, apart from welcoming the government's actions in this regard said, "Absolutely, the government, justice and judiciary's actions is not for media organizations, because Nai had submitted about 500 cases of violence to government for prosecution, but government only responded to 20."

From the viewpoint of Nai, about 20 cases from a total 500 cases of violence against journalist, shows the poor views they have on violence against journalists, and freedom of speech.

Khalvatgar said: "The interior ministry and the judiciary organs should have a complete review on cases, and those found guilty should be made to face the full rigors of the law."

He also added: "There is a lot of obligations that should rest on the police and government. Government should not fulfill its current tasks only, but must continue to act until the media community in Afghanistan is fully satisfied."

In May 2016, according to a presidential order, a joint committee of media support organizations and state agencies such as the Ministries of Interior Affairs, Defense, Information and Culture, National Security Agency and the Supreme Court, was held under the chairmanship of the second deputy president. This committee examined all the documents of cases of violence against journalist compiled by Nai, and identified the cases, which should be prosecuted and forwarded them to the relevant departments with an official letter. Nai expected that after sending these documents to the responsible departments, a large number of them will be solved by identifying and punishing the perpetrators, but after one whole year, only 24 cases are solved and others are still unresolved.

Hekmatyar's remarks against the media deemed unlawful and unreligious

In the first appearance of Islamic party leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in public after 2 decades of absence, he criticized free speech and some of the country's media organizations.

He in his talks in Laghman, and later in Jalalabad, he aimed insulting words at the state media, and these





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submissions of Hekmatyar drew severe reactions and criticisms from the media community.

Nai Media Watch in its statement of response, condemned these words and adjudged them to be unreligious and untrue.

A section of the statement reads: “The cussing of this noble sector is unreligious and calling them vipers is untrue.”

Abdul Mujeeb Khalvatgar, Nai Executive Director said: “I think the Islamic party leader, because he was outside of Afghanistan, did not have information about the current situation in the country with respect to people’s right to freedom of speech, so these statements were made in ignorance. After he has spent some days here, he will recognize that he should not fight against the values of the people.”

Mr. Khalvatgar continued: “We all want peace. Peace process paves the ground for media development but that process which could guarantee the recent 15 years achievements and the values indicated into Afghan constitution. By having the constitution which guarantees freedom of speech, there should not be any talks through peach process against the constitution

In his point of view, the president is obliged fulfill the confidence of citizens with regards to developments. Adding, “Freedom of speech is a stout tree that will not shiver in the wind, we media should not forget our reporting obligation which says us to report any crimes with no consideration of who made it. we should not let the public to forget these crimes the perpetrators of them.

Nai’s statement insists that the Afghan state in particular the president and the CEO are obliged to save and keep these successes, and that these two leaders are together are accountable to God and the people.

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar’s remarks about the media and freedom of speech also provoked a severe reaction from the Ministry of Information and Culture, and Sayed Aqa Hussain Fazel Sancharaki, the Deputy Minister of Publishing said: “No one inside government and no political party has the right to talk against freedom of speech, and to ignore this value.”

CEO: Religion should not be used as the grounds to deny freedom of speech

Journalist and freedom of speech defenders and media supporters, held a session in Kabul as part of the National Media Conference on Journalist Safety and Security.

CEO Dr. Abdullah Abdullah who also attended the session said the recent developments with regards to freedom of speech in Afghanistan should be regarded as an unprecedented value in Afghanistan.

Dr Abdullah said;” Afghan media comparing with the region countries media is in a good position.”

He also said, in response to a question from a journalist about the recent remarks of Hekmatyar said: “No one can limit the freedom of speech under the pretext of Islam. And with time, he will learn how to behave with Afghan people and the media.”

It is worth mentioning that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in his initial speech earlier in the week in Laghman and





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Jalalabad adjudged the media as vipers and wanted the people to shut the “mouth” of the media. Deputy Information and Culture Minister Sayed Aqa Hussian Sancharaki, who also spoke in this session reacted to Hekmatyar’s recent statements, and said: “We welcome the peace process in Afghanistan, but by no means will deal with Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s fundamental values which democracy and Islam. He continued: “The groups which lay down their weapons and join the peace, should mind their oral delivery in the media, and desist from abhorrent utterances.”

Fahim Dashti, Executive Director of the Afghan National Journalist Union (ANJU) that convened the conference also spoke about the challenges facing journalist and the media.

He criticized the ignorance of government especially the Ministry of Interior Affairs and other security departments for the lack of investigation, saying: “In four sessions of the joint committee with the responsible departments, they did not review the violence against journalists documents and just ignore them.

Mr. Dashti said: “Out of the 69 cases of journalist ’ murder in Afghanistan, only two cases were investigated by government, and the rest were ignored.”

At the end of the conference, provincial delegates also spoke about the specific challenges they face in their respective areas.

Shafiq Poya, a local journalist of Khurshid TV in Takhar province and the ANJU local representative there reported of threats from Imams, and other religious fanatics. He gave the example of an incident where one of the Imams adjudged as infidel the photographers and journalist , and also insulted women.

He also addressed issues of security to the authorities present – the spokesperson at the office of the president, and Independent Directorate of Local Government spokesperson saying: “Currently government is silent against these people. But if they start to announce Jihad against the government then what would the government do on that regard, indeed anything would be too late.”

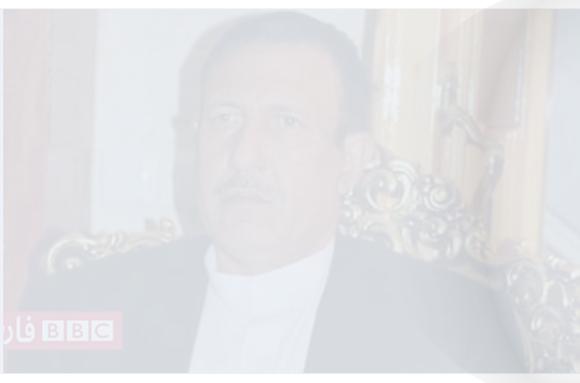
It is worth mentioning that the final sessions of the conference saw the presentation of certificates to media experts and professional journalists.

Users unsatisfied with internet services speed and cost in Afghanistan

Nai undertook a survey into people’s access to internet in six provinces in Afghanistan. In this survey in which more than 500 internet users in Bamyan, Kabul, Kapisa, Kandahar and Laghman provinces participated, the results show that 91.5 percent of users of the different internet service providers are completely unhappy about the speed of internet.

Abdul Mujeeb Khalvatgar, the Executive Director of Nai in a news conference that was held to announce the results said: “Only 8.5 percent of all the respondents were satisfied.”

High cost of internet, poor speed, lack of transparency about the 10 percent tax allotted to government, poor





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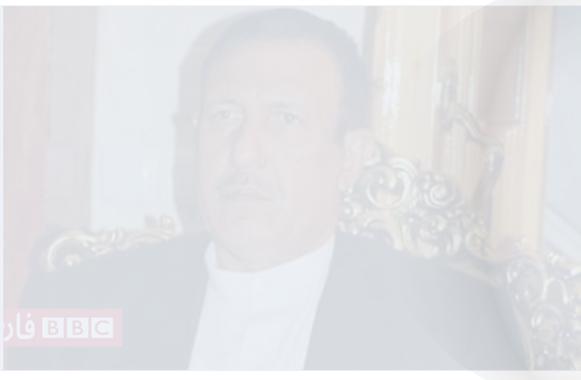
customer services, and the systematic fraudulent means by which credits are deducted from users, are some of the causes of this dissatisfaction on the part of users.

Khalvatgar said: “While Afghanistan’s GDP is 50 percent lower than that of Ukraine, the cost of internet here is four times more here comparatively, and that is not proportionate by any means.”

From the viewpoint of Nai, this high rate of dissatisfaction and the state’s policy towards telecommunication companies show that there is no hope of getting better services from them.

According to Nai’s finding from the telecommunications industry, cost of 1MB of internet in Afghanistan though Pakistan was US\$ 120 and now is US\$ 96 , from Iran was US\$ 180 and now is US\$ 144, from Kazakhstan it was US\$ 339 and now is US\$ 268. Despite to these decrease, in in action nothing happened, no decrease on costs and no increasing of quality in internet services.

It is worth mentioning that the current cost of internet in Afghanistan is the highest in the region. While MB cost of internet in Pakistan is US\$ 29, in India is US\$ 18, in Turekey is US\$14, in Kazakhstan is US\$12 and in Ukraine it is US\$ 3 per MB.





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Attention!

All journalists and media organizations are hereby notified that Mr. Mr. Atiqullah Saket 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 0777274099 or via email at: saket.atiq@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/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.

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