

Afghanistan Media at a Glance

(Second week - December 2021)

Resumption of Ayna TV broadcasts was the positive news for December second week. Though, Radio Firozkoh has been deactivated due to financial problems in Ghor province. Coordination of journalists and provincial departments of information and culture have increased. Conversely, broadcasts of music and entertainment programs have been banned in some provinces.

Eastern Region:

The AJSC representative has been constantly working to improve coordination between journalists and provincial departments. Nangarhar Provincial Department of Information and Culture has nominated and introduced a representative to facilitate communication and coordination with journalists and media.

Nangarhar: AJSC representative met with a number of media officials in the province to discuss media safety and financial problems.

Kunar: AJSC voluntarily participated in an investigative reporting training workshop for journalists in the province and delivered training presentation on safety and risk management issues for journalists.

Laghman: As per the invitation and request of AJSC provincial focal point, a meeting was held with the media officials to improve medial coordination and cooperation efforts. Media workers and officials from provincial National Radio and Television, Radio Kawon Ghaj, Soli Arman, Ziar and Raghun were attending the meeting.

North-east Region:

Takhar: Subsequent to the meeting with Provincial Director of Information and Culture and hearing government's commitment to media safety and access to information, media workers and journalist were somehow reassured and their concerns eased to some extent. They seem to continue their work at an almost better spirit.

Treatment of journalists by provincial government officials, in particular the director of information and culture, has improved. Restrictions to media broadcast have changed through improving coordination and frequent meetings with the director of information and culture. However, broadcast of TV series and movies showing women's faces are still banned in addition to the ban on women's voice on radio.

Kunduz: A journalist was detained by provincial intelligence authorities on charges of illegally commissioning of passports. He was later released through mediation of AJSC provincial

representative. Provincial director of information and culture confirmed the issue as misunderstanding.

Southeast Region:

Khost: Journalists are invited to provincial government meetings and sessions when provincial units are interested. However, problems still exist on access to information for journalists. Provincial government spokespersons are not familiar on providing information and journalists struggle accessing information.

Paktika: A newly established radio station called Nejat Ghag has begun operation in the province. Journalists have to wait several days to get information on incidents occurring in the province. Officials, including the governor, are neither in contact with journalists and nor cooperate. Although reporters have repeatedly asked to meet governor, police chief and other government officials their requests have not yet been responded.

Paktia: Although the issue of access to information has not been fully resolved in the province, access to information on regular topics journalists work have been facilitated to some extent. Security has improved for journalists going to remote districts.

Logar: A meeting was held the Director of Information and Culture, spokespersons for provincial governor, police headquarter and intelligence provincial office. They promised to provide timely information to journalists and media.

North Region:

Two incidents happened to journalists, a robbery of a journalist's house in Faryab and arrest of a media worker in Samangan. Both incidents were no related to their media work. Heads of information and culture for the relevant provinces promised addressing journalist problems including access to information in meetings with AJSC representatives.

Balkh: Provincial office of Promoting of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has imposed new restrictions in a meeting with journalists in the province. Considering women's hijab, broadcasting music and several other cases were mentioned in the eight-article verdict.

Faryab: Access to information rights is relatively improving subsequent to meetings of AJSC representative and the provincial director for information and culture on media challenges in the province.

No clue has yet been attained on the robbery Gholam Sakhi Shokran Dadfar's house, a local journalist in Faryab.

Sarepul: AJSC provincial focal point called access to information as rights of journalists and the public and the duty of government to provide information to the media. Mufti Umayr Sarpoli, head of information and culture promised to improve access to information and committed to encourage all provincial departments to provide timely information.

Jawzjan: Broadcasting music on audio media was banned in Jawzjan province.

In the latest case, the authorities in Jawzjan province have instructed the audio media to avoid any music broadcast

West Region:

Ghor: Radio Firoozkooh has been deactivated due to financial problems and all its staff have been laid off. Radio officials claimed they may reopen but journalists and media workers are complaining of their unpaid salaries.

Farah: Provincial Department of Information and Culture has established better coordination between provincial departments and journalists.

Journalists are invited to most provincial meetings and programs. Programs and news information are shared to reporters through WhatsApp Groups by Department of Information and Culture.

Badghis: AJSC provincial representative shared problems of media community with provincial director of information and culture. Issues shared included lack of access to information, unavailability of spokespersons for provincial departments and banning of female journalists from working in the media.

The provincial director assured that the required information would be shared with reporters and that unavailability of spokespersons for provincial departments would be addressed.

The director of information and culture of Badghis province also said that he had talked to relevant authorities about allowing female journalists to engage in media activities and the issue would soon be resolved.