



Sultan Mohammad Munadi

Journalist

Date of Birth: 1975

Date of Death: 2009

Site of the Incident: Kunduz Province

Person / Group Responsible for the Incident: NATO Forces

Life and Education

He was born in 1975 in the village of Astana, Bazarak District, Panjshir Province. His early education took place at Amir Shir Ali Khan School in Kabul. After completing his secondary education at Naderia High School in 1991, Munadi graduated from Kabul University's Journalism Faculty in 2003 after a delay caused by the civil war.

On Saturday, September 5, 2009, Munadi was covering the foreign forces' airstrike in Chardara, Kunduz province, alongside an Irish-British journalist when he was kidnapped by the Taliban. After three days of captivity, he was killed on Wednesday, September 9, 2009, during a rescue operation carried out by British forces. Munadi is survived by two children. (Source: 8 Sobh Newspaper)

Activities

From 1997 to 2002, Munadi worked at the International Committee of the Red Cross in Gulbahar as the communications and public relations officer. He played a key role in coordinating the organization's activities in the northern and central regions.

After the establishment of the interim government, from 2002 to 2006, he worked as a local journalist for *The New York Times*, writing numerous reports in English and serving as a translator and office manager.

In 2006, Munadi joined *Sobh ba khair Afghanistan* and *Avanama* publications. He produced and directed over four feature films and two documentaries, along with more than 100 TV commercials for national and international organizations. Munadi also founded a program named "Enekas" at National Radio Television Afghanistan. (Source: 8 Sobh Newspaper)

Challenges During His Activies

Journalists in Afghanistan have faced numerous challenges in their efforts to report the news, with one of the most significant being security challenges and the threat of encountering terrorists and extremist groups, including the Taliban. Munadi was among those who were captured by the Taliban during his work, and like several other journalists, no efforts were made to secure his release from captivity, ultimately leading to his killing.

Memories and Quotes

"... We spent three weeks together in Sweden for a journalism course. He was the most honorable man I had ever met. He would joke and laugh with us, but when he wasn't around, he was definitely praying. When he shared his life story with me, I looked into his eyes. He was my age, but the wrinkles around his eyes told of unimaginable hardship. He always smiled. He had seen so much of the world that he knew how worthless life could be. Instead of holding resentment against all forms of evil, he had made his heart a home for love. He had a big heart.

Memories and Quotes

The last email he sent me from Germany was full of longing.

He said he hadn't seen the birth of his second son. At least he saw six-month-old Makin, before he left. He came back to Afghanistan for vacation and was kidnapped along with the *New York Times* journalist. Three days later, they rescued the Irish journalist, planted a bullet in Sultan's head, and left his body. Curse be upon war, upon occupation, and upon this geographical compulsion."

This excerpt was published by *8 Sobh* quoting one of Munadi's friends.

Photos / Notes

In another part of the memoir from *8 Sobh*, Munadi's friend mentioned:

"... During our time in Sweden, we selected the topic: 'Do journalists have the right to cry?' We asked each other when the last time was that tears overtook us. when we forgot we were journalists and our hearts were crushed by pain. **This is what Sultan wrote on the topic:** *One morning in 2006, after a suicide bombing in Kabul, I saw the half-burned bodies of three boys, around seven years old. Among the dead were two women, one of whom had been cut in half, and the other had half her head missing. The body of a yogurt seller whose bicycle was thrown by the explosion was on the ground. Yogurt had coated the black asphalt road in white. I know such events won't affect me because ever since I learned to tell left from right, I have witnessed numerous deaths. I have seen many heads without bodies or headless bodies,*

Photos / Notes

or people who had only one arm or one leg, or even many pieces of human bodies. However, my heart is not made of stone or iron. When I climb a mountain or look at the swift waves of the sea, I cannot control my emotions, and I cannot stop myself from crying."

Aspirations and Goals

A few days before being captured by the Taliban, Munadi wrote a note in English on his blog, which was later published on the New York Times website. In part of this note, Munadi briefly mentioned his goals:

"... Now I am hopeful of a better situation. And if I leave this country, if other people like me leave this country, who will come to Afghanistan? Will it be the Taliban who come to govern this country? That is why I want to come back, even if it means cleaning the streets of Kabul. That would be a better job for me, rather than working, for example, in a restaurant in Germany.

Being a journalist is not enough; it will not solve the problems of Afghanistan. I want to work for the education of the country, because the majority of people are illiterate. That is the main problem facing many Afghans. I am really committed to come back and work for my country."

Reactions to the Incident

"Why wasn't Munadi saved?" This question remained unanswered for many, and it was central to all reactions following his killing. His killing sparked reactions accusing foreign forces of negligence towards citizens' security. President Hamid Karzai ordered an investigation into Munadi's murder, while the Afghan parliament, the Civil Society and Human Rights Network of Afghanistan, and journalist advocacy organizations also demanded an inquiry. *BBC* quoted the Civil Society and Human Rights Network of Afghanistan as saying: "His victimization showed how human rights defenders are 'exploited and used for political deals.'"

Links

1. BBC - Article on Munadi's Death

https://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2009/09/090909_ram_journalist_killed

2. BBC - Investigations into Munadi's Death

https://www.bbc.com/persian/afghanistan/2009/09/090912_a-munadi-investigations

3. Da Azadi Radio - Report on Munadi's Case

<https://da.azadiradio.com/a/1819750.html>

4. Deutsche Welle - Protest Against Munadi's Murder

<https://www.dw.com/fa-af/%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B6-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87-%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%86%DA%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%BA%D8%A7%D9%86/a-4680370>

5. Letter from a Friend of Munadi

<https://8am.media/fa/-به-خاطر-سلطان-منادی-عزیز-که-جان-اش-را-به>

6. Sultan Mohammad Munadi's Note

<https://archive.nytimes.com/atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/02/hell-no-i-wont-go/>

Case Status

Despite a directive from the Afghan presidency to investigate the killing of Sultan Mohammad Munadi, the case did not reach a satisfactory conclusion. Even nearly a year after the investigations began, the findings were deemed unsatisfactory by the Journalists' Union. In an article marking the one-year anniversary of Munadi's killing, published on the Reporters Without Borders website, Bari Salam, the editor-in-chief of "Sobh ba Khair Afghanistan" radio, was quoted as saying: "Although the Ministry of Interior's investigations revealed that Munadi was killed by British forces, the perpetrators have not yet been arrested by the Afghan government."