

HRD+ Statement

Regarding the Increase in Restrictions on Media and the Ban on Political Programs

19/02/2025

The de facto Taliban administration, despite repeated calls from civil society, intellectuals, academics, political and economic sectors of the country, continues to impose ever-increasing restrictions on media freedom and other civil liberties. Recently, the de facto Taliban administration issued a decree limiting political programs, including the complete prohibition of all political discussions on media platforms.

The Taliban's extremist rule is gradually imposing intellectual repression on the country's citizens through various means, plunging society into an information crisis and restricting access to it. These actions by the Taliban violate all fundamental principles and basic civil rights and undermine Afghanistan's global commitments.

It is the fundamental right of the people to be informed about the direction of the country's political, social, cultural, and economic affairs, the role of the government in social security, and the evolving stance of the international community on Afghanistan. Political and social programs in the media serve the critical function of engaging analysts to address these vital issues and provide a space for political discourse for Afghan citizens. Unfortunately, the oppressive Taliban administration is depriving the people of this crucial opportunity.

Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+) urges media-supporting institutions worldwide, in the region, and in Afghanistan to take a firm stance on this matter and to persist in their efforts to influence the Taliban's approach.

HRD+ also calls on the human rights treaty monitoring committees, particularly the Human Rights Committee, which oversees the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to take serious action in accordance with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 20 of the ICCPR, to which Afghanistan is a signatory.

HRD+ urges all media outlets operating outside Afghanistan to fill this gap in national media by focusing more on political programming and making every effort to compensate for the restrictions imposed on media inside the country.

HRD+ also calls on all Afghan citizens to actively use social media platforms to create and participate in serious political and social programs, ensuring that the people respond to these repressive measures with strong advocacy and accountability.

HRD+ invites the UN oversight and accountability mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as relevant working groups and experts, to challenge this decree and similar restrictive measures that limit the role of the media in Afghanistan and to adopt serious monitoring initiatives in response.

Media freedom is the foundation of an informed society!
Human Rights Defenders Plus (HRD+)