

3.8. Journalists and other media workers

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: June 2026

This profile refers to the situation of journalists and other media workers (perceived as) critical of the Taliban or as not complying with conditions and limitations set by the Taliban. Situation of family members is also addressed.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Country Focus 2026, 1.1.1., 1.1.2., 1.2.7 c, 4.6.; Country Focus 2024, 4.3, 4.7, 4.11.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Following the Taliban's return to power, repression of Afghan journalists has intensified, leading to a large exodus, with some journalists going into hiding. Further restrictions have been introduced on media, often vague and confusing, making them difficult to follow in practice. For example, Article 17 of the 'Morality law' specifies that *de facto* MPVPV inspectors are to ensure that contents of publication or public information do not contradict *sharia*, 'deride or humiliate Muslims', or include pictures of 'animate objects'. Media outlets accused of violating these instructions have been suspended or shut down. The Afghan media landscape has been described as 'devoid of pluralism'. Only a few independent media outlets still operate in the country and media workers have resorted to self-censorship, driven by a fear of retribution. Female media workers have been particularly affected by restrictions.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which journalists and other media workers could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. Journalists and media workers have increasingly been facing arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, as well as harassment, threats and intimidation by the *de facto* authorities. Journalists have reportedly been detained on allegations such as having links to media outlets operating in exile, producing content considered not in line with Taliban restrictions or failing to cover official events. Beatings, torture and physical abuse in custody are used to deter other journalists from reporting on 'sensitive' or 'inappropriate' issues.

Family members of journalists have been threatened and detained by the de facto authorities as a way to obtain information, and to scare and intimidate them.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for journalists and other media workers (perceived as) critical or as not complying with conditions and limitations set by the Taliban given the severity and persistent nature of the targeting and the general policy to suppress critical voices.

Family members of individuals under this profile may also have a well-founded fear of persecution, as threats and detentions have been reported in order to make it difficult for people to speak up.

In the case of a female applicant under this profile, it is reminded that in light of the current situation, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for Afghan women and girls.

For additional information, see 3.13. Women and girls

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of individuals under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion** and/or **religion** as the restrictions imposed on journalists and other media workers derive from a strict interpretation of *sharia* and contravening them may also be perceived as opposition to the Taliban rule.

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