Reporters Without Borders currently ranks Afghanistan 122nd out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index.[[1]](#footnote-1) Under the Taliban, journalists in Afghanistan have been killed,[[2]](#footnote-2) illegally searched,[[3]](#footnote-3) beaten,[[4]](#footnote-4) arbitrarily detained,[[5]](#footnote-5) disappeared,[[6]](#footnote-6) and tortured.[[7]](#footnote-7) The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented at least 60 such incidents against journalists and activist.[[8]](#footnote-8) The Taliban also arrested at least 32 journalists between August 15 and October 1 alone; giving some journalists “warnings regarding their reporting and release[ing them],” while beating others.[[9]](#footnote-9) The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) also reported Taliban beating and detaining protesters and up to 20 journalists.[[10]](#footnote-10) At least seven journalists were killed between January and August of 2021.[[11]](#footnote-11) The Taliban’s persecution is not limited to journalists, other media members are facing the same restrictions and insecurity.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Beyond physical attacks and intimidations, the Taliban has also severely restricted journalists’ work[[13]](#footnote-13) through new media regulations and guidelines.[[14]](#footnote-14) The restrictions include a ban on broadcasting international news programs,[[15]](#footnote-15) as well as restrictions on criticism of the Taliban.[[16]](#footnote-16) Media outlets were instructed to refrain from “broadcasting people’s complaints, airing negative content, reporting news that had not been confirmed [by the Taliban] and speaking against the Taliban administration.”[[17]](#footnote-17) Topics that are off-limits also include opium production, military and police actions, protests, and the ongoing conflict with the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP).[[18]](#footnote-18) Media outlets are also required “to obtain approval from provincial authorities in advance of publication or broadcast.”[[19]](#footnote-19) The Taliban has warned media members that they will be targeted “unless they stop[] broadcasting . . . ‘anti-Taliban statements.’”[[20]](#footnote-20) As such, journalist whom the Taliban believe to have criticized them, or somehow undermined their authority, are met with violent reprisals. As a result, many journalists and media workers have begun to engage in self-censorship.[[21]](#footnote-21) Indeed, the Taliban’s suppression of speech is so severe that they even react violently towards private individuals.[[22]](#footnote-22) A man was detained, s*everely* tortured, and left dead by a riverbank for having published a post on his private Facebook account questioning how the Taliban could pay teachers’ salaries when they were surviving off food donations.[[23]](#footnote-23) The individual quickly removed the post, but his self-censorship did not save him from the Taliban’s reprisal.[[24]](#footnote-24) The Taliban likewise target journalists’ and media members’ family members.[[25]](#footnote-25)

The Taliban’s violent reactions against perceived criticism have had a severe chilling effect on free speech, dissent, and on journalists’ and activists’ safety in Afghanistan.[[26]](#footnote-26) The Taliban’s reactions include the publicized abduction and torture of a former TV host and presenter in Kabul[[27]](#footnote-27) and the torture of two journalists who covered a women’s protests.[[28]](#footnote-28) The Taliban even conducted door-to-door searches of individuals who took part in the protests.[[29]](#footnote-29) Many journalists have fled Afghanistan as a result of the attacks and human rights violations.[[30]](#footnote-30) Over 300 media outlets closed, rendering approximately 60 percent of journalists unemployed.[[31]](#footnote-31) Journalists that left their jobs, but remain in Afghanistan, report living in hiding to avoid being targeted by the Taliban.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The insecurity[[33]](#footnote-33) caused by the Taliban’s targeting of journalists has been felt most strongly by female media members,[[34]](#footnote-34) as the Taliban do not believe women should work in any employment area other than education and health care.[[35]](#footnote-35) A female former radio station owner, who fled her home for fear of the Taliban, reports being told “Why are you, a woman, running a radio station. You should stay home and look after your family,” by a Taliban member.[[36]](#footnote-36) In some instances, the Taliban have even instructed NGOs to stop female staff members from attending offices and field work.[[37]](#footnote-37) In August of 2021, Farah’s Provincial NGO Commissioner even instructed humanitarian partners that “women were not allowed to resume their work until further notice.”[[38]](#footnote-38) According to advocacy groups, out of the female journalists left, many are working under pseudonyms to “avoid recognition, harassment, and retaliation.”[[39]](#footnote-39) As of September of 2021, less than 100 of the 700 female journalists in Kabul, Afghanistan’s capital, remain.[[40]](#footnote-40) Overall, 15 out of the 36 provinces in Afghanistan no longer have any female reporters; 80% of female journalists have been pushed out of the profession.[[41]](#footnote-41)

Civil society members and human rights defenders (“activists”) have also been subjected to violence by the Taliban.[[42]](#footnote-42) The violence includes extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, and torture.[[43]](#footnote-43) Here too, women activists are particularly vulnerable.[[44]](#footnote-44) Several women’s rights defenders have been threatened and widely fear reprisals since the violent crackdown of the women’s rights protests held during the initial days of the Taliban’s takeover.[[45]](#footnote-45) “Defenders documenting alleged war crimes; women defenders, in particular criminal lawyers; cultural rights defenders; and defenders from minority groups” are also among the most at-risk groups.[[46]](#footnote-46) Relatives and family members of activists similarly face threats and intimidation.[[47]](#footnote-47) As a result, many activists have fled the country.[[48]](#footnote-48) Many who remain have gone into hiding to avoid retaliation from the Taliban or have relocated because they are too well known—and therefore easy to find—in their communities.[[49]](#footnote-49) Activists are even scrubbing their online presence to avoid the Taliban’s detection.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with real or perceived ties to the United States government, or any other western government, are also at risk.[[51]](#footnote-51) In October 2021, the Taliban declared a prominent U.S.-based humanitarian aid organization an “enemy of the state.”[[52]](#footnote-52) Taliban forces then proceeded “to occup[y] the organization’s Kabul offices, seize[] their vehicles, and warn[] that NDS officials were determined to ‘punish’ the organization on alleged charges of Christian proselytization.”[[53]](#footnote-53) The Taliban have also raided other civil organizations’ offices in search of employees’ names, addresses, and contact information.[[54]](#footnote-54) In fact, in August, the Taliban conducted door-to-door searches of individuals who work, or worked, with international NGOs.[[55]](#footnote-55) Many NGOs have hence closed their offices for fear of the Taliban’s reprisals.[[56]](#footnote-56) Similarly, many media outlets and numerous civil society groups have had to shut down.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Since the Taliban is Afghanistan’s government, media members, and activists have no legal recourse against the aforementioned atrocities.[[58]](#footnote-58) In fact, a journalist in Kandahar reports that when he went to a police station to report having witnessed Taliban members beating another journalist, he was told “to never come there for these issues.”[[59]](#footnote-59) On top of the government persecution, journalists and activists in Afghanistan are also at risk of violence from ISIS/ISKP.[[60]](#footnote-60)

1. *Afghanistan*, Reporters Without Borders, https://rsf.org/en/country/afghanistan (last visited May 1, 2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *See, e.g.*, *Violence Against Journalists Increases in Afghanistan: Report*, Ariana News (Mar. 16, 2022), https://ariananews.af/violence-against-journalists-increases-in-afghanistan-report (“As many as 117 cases of violence against journalists and media workers were registered in Afghanistan within one year since March 2021. . . . Four journalists were killed during the period.”); *Watchdog: 30 Recent Cases of Violence Against Afghan Journalists*, Al Jazeera (Oct. 28, 2021), https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/28/afghanistan-journalists-watchdog-violence-taliban-media; *Afghanistan: Taliban Severely Restrict Media*, Hum. Rts. Watch (Oct. 1 2021, 12:00 AM), https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/01/afghanistan-taliban-severely-restrict-media (“Taliban commanders and fighters have long engaged in a pattern of threats, intimidation, and violence against members of the media, and have been responsible for targeted killings of journalists.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *See, e.g.*,Fereshta Abbasi, *Taliban Intensify Attacks on Afghan Media*, Hum. Rts. Watch (Mar. 30, 2022), https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/30/taliban-intensify-attacks-afghan-media (“On March 28, security officers from the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence raided the offices of four radio stations in the southern city of Kandahar for violating a ban on music and detained six journalists. All were released only after they promised they would never broadcast music again.”); *Family Says Journalist in Kandahar Arrested*, TOLO News (Mar. 27, 2022), https://tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan-177293. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *See, e.g.*, *Afghan Journalist Zaki Qais Beaten at Home in Kabul*, Comm. to Protect Journalists (Jan. 19 2022), https://cpj.org/2022/01/afghan-journalist-qais-zaki-beaten-at-home-in-kabul (“[Qais] had been harassed repeatedly by authorities and Taliban supporters—[he’d been told to stop posting anti-Taliban news on his Facebook page]. . . . He told CPJ that he had stopped working at Khawar TV shortly after the Taliban seized power. . . . On August 17, 2021, a group of armed . . . Taliban members arrived at Qais’ home and beat him for two hours, slapping his face and hitting him with a gun while saying that his work was ‘not journalism,’ he said. Separately, on September 26, Taliban members detained Qais while he filmed a women’s anti-Taliban protest in Kabul; he said authorities held him for about six hours and whipped him 20 times before releasing him.”); *Afghanistan: Journalists Tell of Beatings by Taliban*, BBC News (Sept. 9, 2021), https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58500579. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *See, e.g.*, *Taliban Detain and Release at Least 7 Journalists and Media Workers; Ban Broadcasts from BBC, VOA, DW*, Comm. to Protect Journalists (Mar. 28, 2022, 4:33 PM), https://cpj.org/2022/03/taliban-detain-and-release-at-least-7-journalists-and-media-workers-ban-broadcasts-from-bbc-voa-dw [hereinafter *Detain and Release at Least 7 Journalists*] (“Since Saturday, March 26, Taliban forces have detained and then released at least seven journalists and media workers. . . . On Saturday, Taliban forces in Kandahar detained the independent local broadcaster Zema Radio’s director, Mirwais Atal, after raiding his home. . . . Authorities held Atal for about 15 hours . . . then transferred him to an undisclosed location.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *See, e.g.*, *Afghanistan: Taliban Free Detained Journalists Held in Kabul While Working for UNHCR*, Deutsche Welle (Feb. 12, 2022), https://www.dw.com/en/afghanistan-taliban-free-detained-journalists-held-in-kabul-while-working-for-unhcr/a-60746314 (detailing how two UN High Commissioner of Refugees journalists were detained and later released when news of their detention broke); *Taliban Reportedly Releases Two Kabul Journalists Held For Unknown Reasons*, Gandhara (Feb. 2, 2022), https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/taliban-releases-kabul-ariana-journalists/31683048.html (“[T]wo [journalists] were detained by armed Taliban guards at the front gate of their organization on January 31. No reason was given for the move, and no government agency or ministry confirmed the two had been taken into custody.”); *EU, UNAMA, Amnesty Intl Raise Concerns over Detained Reporters*, TOLO News (Feb. 1, 2022), https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/attack-mediajournalists-176542 (“[T]wo reporters . . . were arrested by Islamic Emirate forces on Monday and so far the reasons behind their arrest are not known. . . . [The] whereabouts of the two reporters are unknown. . . . UNAMA . . . called on the Islamic Emirate to make clear why it has arrested them and also make clear the whereabouts of women activists who went missing two weeks ago.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *See, e.g.*,U.S. Dep’t of State, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan 28-29 (April 12, 2022), https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/afghanistan [hereinafter State Dep’t Country Report] (“Taliban security forces searched the home of independent television network owner Aref Nouri without a warrant on December 26 and took Nouri to an undisclosed location for two days. . . . On September 7, Taliban fighters detained a freelance photographer after he covered a protest. . . . On September 8, according to the CPJ, the Taliban detained and later released at least 14 journalists covering protests in Kabul . . . at least nine of the journalists were subjected to violence during their arrests or detention. On September 18, an unidentified man shot journalist Mohammad Ali Ahmadi after accusing him of working for an ‘American radio station.’ . . . CPJ reported in October that Taliban fighters assaulted at least three journalists covering a women’s protest in Kabul for demanding ‘work, bread, and education.’ The fighters also attacked a photographer working with a French news agency, who captured some of the violence on camera.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *See, e.g.*,Lois Beckett, *The Taliban Forced Afghan TV Workers into Hiding. Now they’re Asking Hollywood for Help*, The Guardian (Feb. 14, 2022, 1:00 EST), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/13/afghan-tv-workers-taliban-hollywood (“Rahima, a screenwriter, . . . has stayed in hiding for the past five and a half months. . . . ‘In our neighborhood, everyone recognizes me as a woman activist, the university teacher and TV employee,’ Rahima said. . . . Abdul, who worked for a decade as an assistant director and producer, now runs a small food stand to support his family, including his 10-month-old baby. Based in a city full of Taliban checkpoints, he is still afraid that someone will recognize him from his work in TV. Fearful of the risk, he sometimes sends his younger brother to run the food stall instead.”); *See also* Maya Oppenheim, *Afghan Journalists Decry Taliban Rules Restricting Role of Women on TV*, The Guardian (Nov. 23, 2021), https://www.asylos.eu/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=6273d097-3d5c-4b3a-a7ec-6ef0ae0b86dc. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Over 180 Media Outlets Inactive in Afghanistan: Media Survey*, The Khaama Press (Mar. 16 2022), https://www.khaama.com/over-180-media-outlets-inactive-in-afghanistan-media-survey-65867567 (“[S]enior media executives told CPJ on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation against their Kabul staff that they regularly receive messages from Taliban intelligence operatives who threaten to revoke the organization’s operating license and arrest their reporters for criticizing the Taliban”); *Cf. Detain and Release at Least 7 Journalists*, *supra* note 5 (“The deputy director for media and public affairs at the Taliban’s General Directorate of Intelligence, Jawad Sargar, said that Atal was detained due to his ‘feministic viewpoints.’”). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 25; Fereshta Abbasi, *Taliban Intensify Attacks on Afghan Media*, Hum. Rts. Watch (March 30, 2022), https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/30/taliban-intensify-attacks-afghan-media (“Journalists say Taliban intelligence officials hold regular meetings with the media to inform them of any new rules.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Fereshta Abbasi, *Taliban Intensify Attacks on Afghan Media*, Hum. Rts. Watch (March 30, 2022), https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/30/taliban-intensify-attacks-afghan-media; *Taliban Hits DW, BBC With Broadcast Bans in Afghanistan*, DW (Mar. 27, 2022), https://www.dw.com/en/taliban-hits-dw-bbc-with-broadcast-bans-in-afghanistan/a-61274630. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *Afghanistan: Taliban Threatening Provincial Media*, Hum. Rts. Watch (Mar. 7, 2022), https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/07/afghanistan-taliban-threatening-provincial-media [hereinafter *Threatening Provincial Media*] (“Many of the journalists said that Taliban intelligence officials regularly meet with media organizations to tell them what to publish and to warn them not to contradict Taliban policies or to report on acts of violence by Taliban officials. . . . Many journalists said they or their colleagues had been beaten for trying to report on anti-Taliban protests, arbitrary detention, rising food prices, and other subjects that cast Taliban officials in a bad light.”); State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 28 (“The directives also included prohibitions on ‘matters that could have a negative impact on the public’s attitude or affect morale should be handled carefully when being broadcast or published.’”). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ehsan Qaane, *Regime Change, Economic Decline and No Legal Protection: What has Happened to the Afghan*

    *Media*, Afghanistan Analysist Network (Mar. 7, 2022), https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/rights-freedom/regime-change-economic-decline-and-no-legal-protection-what-has-happened-to-the-afghan-media (text modifications in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Threatening Provincial Media*, *supra* note 16 (“A reporter from Kandahar said that, after his outlet filed a report on an ISKP attack, they ‘received phone calls from the Taliban spokesperson telling us to stop working on these reports – we are not allowed to broadcast such news.’”). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Qaane, *supra* note 17; Maya Oppenheim, *Afghan Journalists ‘Facing Death Threats’ and Harsh Rules, with Female Reporters Hit Hardest*, The Indep. (Nov. 23, 2021), https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-journalists-death-threats-taliban-b1962772.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 26; *Threatening Provincial Media*, *supra* note 16 (“A journalist in Badakhshan said that, after he wrote a report about a commander who had beaten a resident, a Taliban official ordered him not to publish it and said that ‘this should be the last time that [he] even dares to think of reporting on such issues.’”). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 28-29 (“Throughout the year some reporters acknowledged they avoided criticizing the Taliban and some neighboring countries in their reporting because they feared Taliban retribution.”); Beckett, *supra* note 12 (“[F]ormer media workers described rushing to scrub their Facebook profiles and concealing or throwing out anything in their house that would link them to the entertainment industry.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Cf.* **Caroline Hawley**, *Afghanistan:* ‘*Terrified’ British Council Teachers Still in Hiding*, BBC News (Jan. 14, 2022 ), https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-59967957. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Abubakar Siddique, *‘Tortured from Head To Toe’: Taliban Accused of Killing Afghan Man over Critical Facebook Post*, Gandhara (Dec. 3, 2021), https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-killing-facebook-criticism/31592685.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Abubakar Siddique, *‘Tortured From Head To Toe’: Taliban Accused of Killing Afghan Man over Critical Facebook Post*, Gandhara (Dec. 3, 2021), https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-killing-facebook-criticism/31592685.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Afghanistan: Journalists at Risk of Persecution Need Urgent Protection – UN Experts*, Off. of the High Comm. for Hm. Rts. (Sept. 3, 2021), https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27426&LangID=E (“‘Journalists and media workers, in particular women, are facing heightened risks since the Taliban’s political takeover of Afghanistan,’” the experts said. . . . ‘Reports of targeted killings of journalists and their family members, home raids, threats and intimidation in areas controlled by the Taliban have sharply increased in recent month.’”) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 43 (detailing “allegations of summary executions of persons associated with the previous government, as well as extrajudicial killings of journalists and activists. Taliban authorities often denied that those abuses were taking place.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Arif Ahmadi, *Afghan Journalists Face Ever-Increasing Restrictions*, Khaama Press (April 18, 2022, 5:22 PM), https://www.khaama.com/afghan-journalists-face-ever-increasing-restriction. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 25. The journalists were beaten with cables. *See* *Taliban Severely Beat Journalists*, Hum. Rts. Watch (Sept. 8, 2021), https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/08/afghanistan-taliban-severely-beat-journalists. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Taliban Response to Afghan Protests Increasingly Violent, UN Says*, Thomson Reuters Found. News (Sept. 10, 2021), https://news.trust.org/item/20210910092646-1mzfj; *Cf. Afghanistan Recent Developments in the Security Situation, Impact on Civilians and Targeted Individuals*, Danish Immigr. Ser. (Sept. 8, 2021), https://www.nyidanmark.dk/-/media/Files/US/Landenotater/Afghanistan\_Targetedindiv\_FINAL.pdf?la=en-GB&hash=8F538608E6ED03EF30F77187277BAFC20C576E2A. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Zofeen T. Ebrahim, *In Pakistan, Afghan Refugees Face Hardship and a Frosty Reception*, Thomson Reuters Found. News (April 19, 2022, 9:00 AM), https://news.trust.org/item/20220419101624-lnxrj; *Cf.* Hujjatullah Zia, *I Am Now One of Millions of Afghan Refugees*, Al Jazeera (April 16, 2022), https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/4/16/i-am-now-one-of-millions-of-afghan-refugees (“Media outlets were shut down one after the other; journalists were beaten up and tortured; and the freedom we used to have to go out and report was clearly gone.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 26; *See also* *RSF Urges New UN Special Rapporteur to Act Quickly to Protect Afghan Journalists*, Arab News (April 12, 2022), https://www.arabnews.com/node/1916451/media (“At least 50 media workers have been arrested by the Afghan police and intelligence services since, and more than 300 media organizations have shut down, with many employees fleeing the country.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 43 (“Historic Taliban practices and post-August 15 actions created a climate of uncertainty and fear, which curtailed the work of journalists, civic activists, and human rights defenders, many of whom left the country due to retaliation.”); Arab News, *supra* note 31 (“Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in mid-August last year, Afghan journalists and media reporters have lived in increasing fear amid regular reports of arbitrary detentions, arrests and raids of journalists’ homes.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *Afghanistan: Journalists at Risk of Persecution Need Urgent Protection – UN Experts*, Off. of the High Comm. for Hum. Rts. (Sept. 3, 2021), https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27426&LangID=E (“‘We are deeply worried about the threats and systematic human rights violations faced by female journalists, as they may be targeted for working in the media or simply being a woman in public life,’ the UN experts added.”) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *See Afghanistan: 87% of Women Journalists Have Suffered Discrimination under Taliban Rule*, Int’l Fed’n of Journalists (Mar. 9, 2022), https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/afghanistan-87-of-women-journalists-have-suffered-discrimination-under-taliban-rule.html (“‘The survey, ‘Working conditions of women journalists under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan’ . . . found that: 87% of women journalists have experienced gender discrimination during the Taliban regime[;] 60% of women journalists have lost their jobs and careers[;] 79% of women journalists said they have been insulted and threatened under the Taliban regime, including physical threats, abuse by Taliban officials, written and verbal threats[;] 91% of working women journalists were the sole economic support of their families[;] 87% of women journalists are not motivated to work in the current situation due to fear and panic[.] Respondents also shared deep concerns over Taliban policies affecting security, the restriction of media funding and the lack of a media law. . . . Over 500 respondents from 34 provinces took part in the survey.”); Maya Oppenheim, *Afghan Journalists ‘Facing Death Threats’ and Harsh Rules, with Female Reporters Hit Hardest*, The Indep. (Nov. 23, 2021), https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/afghanistan-journalists-death-threats-taliban-b1962772.html (“Journalists in Afghanistan are facing death threats and harsh new rules, which are particularly impacting women . . . ‘I used to produce reports on virginity testing and violence against women, which no one can cover anymore,’ a woman, who worked as a journalist in Herat in north-western Afghanistan, said. ‘No program covers women’s issues, especially on TV channels.’”). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Emma Graham-Harrison, *Gunmen Were Looking for My Mum’: Daughter of Afghan Ex-Radio Boss*, The Guardian (Jan. 18, 2022), https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/18/gunmen-were-looking-for-my-mum-daughter-of-afghan-ex-radio-boss. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. UN Off. for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affs., Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (Aug. 2021), https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/infographic/afghanistan-humanitarian-access-snapshot-august-2021l. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. UN Off. for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affs., Afghanistan: Humanitarian Access Snapshot (Aug. 2021), https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan/infographic/afghanistan-humanitarian-access-snapshot-august-2021. *See also* *Threatening Provincial Media*, *supra* note 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 26; *Detain and Release at Least 7 Journalists*, *supra* note 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Beckett, *supra* note 12; Abdullah Azizi, *Under Taliban, Number of Women Journalists Halves*, Pajhwok Afghan News (Jan. 30, 2022), https://pajhwok.com/2022/01/30/under-taliban-number-of-women-journalists-halves. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. *Since the Taliban Takeover, 40% of Afghan Media Have Closed, 80% of Women Journalists Have Lost their Jobs*, Reps. Without Borders (Dec. 20, 2021), https://rsf.org/en/taliban-takeover-40-afghan-media-have-closed-80-women-journalists-have-lost-their-jobs. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 21 (at least eight activists were killed between August and December of 2021); *Taliban Continue Crack Down on Human Rights Defenders*, Times of India (Nov. 12, 2021), https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/taliban-continue-crack-down-on-human-rights-defenders/articleshow/87668518.cms. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. *Afghanistan: Six Months After Takeover, No Accountability for Taliban Abuses*, Int’l Fed’n for Hum. Rts. (Feb. 15, 2022), https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/afghanistan/afghanistan-six-months-after-takeover-no-accountability-for-taliban (“[A]t least eight civil society activists and two journalists have been killed since 15 August 2021. In addition, 44 journalists and 10 civil society activists have been arbitrarily detained.”); State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 21; *4 Missing Women Activists Freed: UNAMA*, AVA Press (Feb. 14, 2022), https://avapress.com/en/258122/4-missing-women-activists-freed-UNAMA (detailing how four women activists had been forcibly disappeared along with their relatives and were later released due to public outcry—one of the activists posted a video on social media of the moment when the Taliban broke into her home); *See also* *Afghan Women’s Rights Activists Forcibly Disappeared*, Hum. Rts. Watch (Jan. 24, 2022), https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/24/afghan-womens-rights-activists-forcibly-disappeared. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. *Afghanistan: Six Months After Takeover, No Accountability for Taliban Abuses*, Int’l Fed’n for Hum. Rts. (Feb. 15, 2022), https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/afghanistan/afghanistan-six-months-after-takeover-no-accountability-for-taliban; *Cf. Afghanistan Situation Update*, UN High Comm. for Hum. Rts. (Nov. 8, 2021), https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/afghanistan#\_ga=2.31515518.1967250150.1631532267-1953440255.1627670612 (“On 6 November, the bodies of four women, including one of a women’s rights activist, were discovered in Balkh province in northern Afghanistan. . . . [S]ince September, several female activists have been reportedly detained and tortured by Taliban members.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *Afghanistan Dispatches: UN Says ‘The Safety of Afghan Judges, Prosecutors, And Lawyers – Particularly Women Legal Professionals – Is a Matter for Particular Alarm.’*, Jurist (Dec. 15, 2021), https://Www.Jurist.Org/News/2021/12/Afghanistan-Dispatches-The-Safety-Of-Afghan-Judges-Prosecutors-And-Lawyers-Particularly-Women-Legal-Professionals-Is-A-Matter-For-Particular-Alarm. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Jurist, *supra* note 45; *Woman Activist in Kandahar Says Family Members Beaten*, TOLO News (Sept. 12, 2021), https://tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan-174623 (“Miss Rahmati, who leads a charity naming Heela, (wish) said she has received death threats and her family has also been threatened.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Almost 80 Female Judges, Journalists and Activists Rescued from Afghanistan to Greece*, The Indep. (Nov. 2, 2021), https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/central-asia/afghanistan-greece-judges-journalists-b1949844.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Beckett, *supra* note 12; *Afghanistan: Human Rights Defenders Living under “Climate Of Fear” – UN Expert*, UN High Comm. for Hum. Rts. (Nov. 3, 2021), https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27762&LangID=E. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. *Cf.* State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 30 (“Human rights groups encouraged human rights defenders to delete or modify their online presence to minimize the risk that the Taliban would link them to the former regime or NATO forces.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. *See Foreign Travel Advice: Afghanistan*, UK Foreign Commonwealth & Dev. Off*.*, https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/afghanistan/coronavirus (last visited Nov. 5, 2021) (“There have been a number of serious attacks on both western and Afghan NGOs and vehicles belonging to them, in which people have been killed or injured. NGO workers have been kidnapped near their places of work.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. *Freedom in the World 2022 - Afghanistan*, Freedom House (Feb. 28, 2022), https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2068625.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. See Jurist, *supra* note 45 (“The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has been unable to operate since August, and the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association faces a loss of independence following the de facto authorities’ decision to administer its activities under the de facto ministry of justice.”). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *Cf.* *Afghanistan: Taliban Crackdown on Media Worsens*, Hum. Rts. Watch (Nov. 22, 2021), https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/11/22/afghanistan-taliban-crackdown-media-worsens-0 (“One journalist who had reported complaints about Taliban searching houses and beating people said that the deputy governor called him into his office and told him that if he broadcast anything like that again, ‘He would hang me in the town square.’”). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Threatening Provincial Media*, *supra* note 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. State Dep’t Country Report, *supra* note 7, at 21, 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)