

Global Forum for Media Development calls for urgent support for Afghanistan journalists

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Members of the Global Forum for Media Development are calling for the international community to take urgent steps to support journalism in Afghanistan.

The GFMD global convening in Tirana this week heard graphic and moving evidence from a delegation of journalists from Afghanistan who spoke about the persecution and hardship that Afghan journalists are facing. The lives of journalists in Afghanistan are under threat, resulting in loss of livelihood, exile from home, and loss of future prospects.

The Afghan journalists also highlighted the urgent needs that their colleagues in Afghanistan unanimously voice as a set of actions that is required to save Afghan journalism, protect lives, and provide means for continuation of necessary provision of credible information to the people of Afghanistan.

The priorities articulated by the Afghan journalists who spoke at the meeting were for governments, donors, and multilateral organisations to:

- Put pressure on the Taliban government to ensure safety of journalists, stop harassment, especially of female journalists and their families.
- Make the new government accountable to provide freedom of information gathering and information dissemination efforts of Afghan journalists in Afghanistan.
- Make these elements conditions for recognition and engagement efforts with the Taliban government.
- Provide continued technical and financial assistance to Afghan media outlets and journalists.

We call on states that support free expression, independent media, and human rights to immediately engage in the following three urgent actions:

- Provide technical and financial support to Afghan media outlets and journalists to overcome the immediate economic crisis facing media outlets and Afghan journalists and their families.
- Re-purpose development and assistance resources to support evacuated Afghan journalists so they can provide necessary independent information to the Afghan public.-
- Provide immediate resettlement for Afghan journalists that are in life threatening danger and/or work with states willing to provide interim shelter to provide assistance in that effort, including funding for temporary settlement.

We applaud the government of Albania for their willingness to provide shelter for up to 40 journalists and their families to date. The evacuees have been provided with quality accommodation, funded by international donors and private philanthropy, and received a generous public welcome, we encourage more governments and donors to do the same.