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Editorial**Taliban's media blitz**

During the recent one month, the Taliban militants plundered several local radio stations and stopped activity of tens of printing publications upon attacking districts in different provinces of the country.

Taliban insurgents pillaged equipment of Radio Voice of Dehrawood and set ablaze its building following occupation of that district. Prior to this, Taliban set on fire building of Radio Nisani in Shinwand district and the group have also arranged broadcasting of Radio Nowshahr in Balkh district according to their own interests.

Upon attacking districts, the Taliban turning media to their propaganda tribunals. Passing each day, Taliban narrow the space for media activities. In towns and districts which were recently occupied by Taliban, either the voice of media has been silent, or their activities have been converted according to the Taliban interest. Majority of media activists in areas under Taliban domination have either escaped or relocated to secure areas.

Taliban adversary with media and their violent approach with reporters and media activists have sparked grave concern throughout the country. Releasing a statement, NAI or supporter of Afghanistan Free Media has said that Taliban have not acted to their commitments on freedom of expression but taking steps against them.

Condemning the Taliban action against media, the Ministry of Information and Culture has also said the group is practically in hostility with civil and cultural values of Afghanistan. Taliban enmity with media and civil activists is not a new thing. During their five years rule in the country, Taliban had resorted to violent approach against media. During their domination, except radio voice of Sheria which was the only propaganda tribune of Taliban, no other media was allowed to operate. Even Taliban had shutdown activity of National Radio and Television of Afghanistan.

Today, Taliban also want to return Afghanistan to the past dark era. The group intends to keep the Afghan people in darkness and unawareness, so no one could talk against them. Taliban want the Afghan people to think, live like them and follow their way and style of life.

The picture which was given by foreign media during the last one year on Taliban, as if the group has changed and that they believe in freedom of opinion, civic values and human rights principles, was total proved wrong.

During the recent two months of their domination on certain parts of the country, Taliban have proven that not only have not changed but their approach and behavior have become further extremist and restricted and violent.

Now the time has reached that media activists and supporter bodies, human rights advocates, raise their voice of protests against Taliban's anti media gesture, freedom of speech, women rights and human rights values.

Taliban violent actions against media, women and civic values must be documented and be handed over to international authorities. Taliban leaders who freely travel to regional countries or living in luxuries palaces, should be prosecuted and be accountable for these violations.

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Taliban violence could inspire terrorists, armed groups throughout Middle East

By: Shelly Kintana



KABUL, just after Maghreb prayers, tired Afghan police inspecting responses and backpacks during a recent report to serve as lookouts as night falls. Much of the fighting around here is done at night.

The city is the Taliban's former stronghold and capital when al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden met in 1999 under the former Taliban regime (1996-2001) with Sultan Ahmad Shah al-Dawlati, whose group would later become al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).

At least 95% of US troops have already left Afghanistan and the rest will be out by Aug. 31. This is in sharp contrast with the more gradual pullout from Iraq when, since 2003, the United States didn't promptly seek "the patient" (i.e. the country) out of the "tentative case" before they were ready to stand on their own feet.

Districts have fallen to the Taliban as in shattering one in recent months in the United States must have to get in force out of times even leaving in the middle of the night without informing their Afghan counterparts. The fight is far from over, and the country's largest cities remain under government control. But the situation does not look good.

Some parts of the city of Kandahar have been taken in recent days by the Taliban, including a home of a senior leader of former President Hamid Karzai. And as more foreign fighters are reported among the ranks of

the Taliban, the risks of regional-wide effects grow. According to a recent report by the UN, al-Qaeda is in at least 15 Afghan provinces and operates "under" Taliban protection from Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz provinces.

A disarray army of foreign armed groups have in some cases in recent months allegedly collapsed under the Taliban or fought under their flag in Afghanistan. Afghan soldier Umar Sharif, who was himself imprisoned for weeks by the Taliban in the late 1990s during their former "emancipation" for not having proper beard when he was doing his medical studies in Kabul, said al-Qaeda in an interview in Kabul in July that some of these groups made up primarily of foreign fighters but mostly fought under the flag of the Taliban only to later raise their own flag.

Al-Qaeda under the Taliban regime in the late 1990s served as a training ground for some of those who would later join the Islamic State (IS) and for others who would train them in propaganda and the use of explosives.

Zangeneh was killed when the United States bombed his safe house in a village near the Iraqi city of Baghdad in 2006. AQI, however, served as a precursor to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), formally announced in 2013.

The transnational group that dropped the "in Iraq and Syria" part of its name as it expanded internationally.

Whether they might be Arabs or Central Asian or Pakistani, who make up a significant number of Taliban rank, according to

several security officials Al-Monitor spoke to in the Kandahar, Nangarhar and Kabul provinces — efforts is unclear.

Some former Iraqi al-Qaeda members said al-Qaeda was "more and more" — back in the former Mosul policeman Abu Mansur al-Qasbi, captured in the infamous Dacca prison in Iraq for years and eventually released in Iraq in recent weeks expressed support and/or praised the Taliban in Twitter.

Al-Qaeda and its affiliates and opponents have always looked to cross borders, and a Taliban-led "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" welcome to hosting the group is likely to draw adherents from Iraq and Syria, as it did decades ago.

Two days after this journalist visited the border on the edge of the city of Kandahar, al-Qasbi, who was many times by displaced persons fleeing from war-torn Syria to the Taliban had gathered, all photos and internet service fell and in the city at 6 p.m.

Refugees were heard about two hours later, but it was unclear what was happening. Speaking to three even a few black areas had become impossible without physically going there. On some sides of the city, Taliban flag have been visible from the edges of the city for weeks.

Hours later, after midnight, several could again be heard flying back and forth.

The inability to communicate seemed early reminiscent of — to come as — what has been seen in recent years in Raqqa, Mosul and elsewhere across the Middle East.

And though many international and some Afghan journalists have been welcomed into the Taliban's "capital performance,"

as one member of the Afghan press negotiating team called it in this journalist earlier in July, in some areas widely war does or reported in areas taken over by the group more war information is available. It's not on who and what goes into and comes out of them.

Shelly Kintana is a journalist providing in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Her work has been published in several international, US and Indian media outlets. This article also appeared in Al-Monitor website.

