

CPJ urges Taliban to free imprisoned journalists on International Human Rights Day

December 8, 2025

Ahead of International Human Rights Day on December 10, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) calls on the Taliban to free all journalists imprisoned in Afghanistan.

According to data compiled by CPJ, Taliban authorities [hold at least two journalists](#) behind bars: Mahdi Ansary and Hamid Farhadi, both of whom have been imprisoned for their work with independent Afghan media outlets now operating in exile.

Since the Taliban seized power in August 2021, press freedom has drastically deteriorated in Afghanistan. Journalists have been [systematically targeted](#) through arbitrary arrests, prolonged detention without charge or trial, physical violence, and death threats. We are also concerned about discriminatory restrictions on women journalists, internet shutdowns, and the closure of dozens of media outlets.

These actions constitute clear violations of the fundamental right to freedom of expression and contradict [public statements](#) made by Taliban representatives regarding respect for human rights, including media freedom.

On August 17, 2021, shortly after the Taliban retook control of Afghanistan, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said, “Private media can continue to be free and independent, they can continue their activities.” The Taliban should deliver on its pledges.

We urge the Taliban to mark International Human Rights Day by taking steps that would allow all journalists imprisoned in Afghanistan to return to their families and continue their work without fear of reprisal.

Our advocacy is supported by more than 1,500 journalists, representing over 100 countries, who joined CPJ in a [solidarity action](#) at this year’s Global Investigative Journalism Conference in Malaysia to call on governments around the world to free imprisoned journalists and end impunity for those who attack the press.

The continued imprisonment and harassment of journalists in Afghanistan undermines any claim of moderation or respect for human rights. We strongly urge the Taliban to reverse course and take concrete steps toward genuine press freedom.