



موسسه مصونیت و کاهش بجران

Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization

Civic Space Quarterly Report

October – December 2022

SRMO Afghanistan Civic Space Quarterly Report October to December 2022

Context and summary

The last quarter of 2022 saw the dire human rights situation in Afghanistan sink even further into crisis. During this period, the Taliban banned women from working with NGOs, threw them out of universities and formally reimposed corporal punishment such as flogging and public executions. This doubling down of draconian rule is worsening the already desperate humanitarian situation, crippling the economy and destroying the lives of millions of Afghans, particularly women and girls. The international community's response to the latest restrictions served to highlight just how little leverage international actors have with the Taliban's key decision makers.

From October to December 2022, SRMO's database logged:

- 88 reported abuses (5 killings and 83 arrests) targeting members of civil society - this includes civil society activists, local media, teachers, social media influencers and NGOs. The equivalent figure for July to September was 25.
- A total of 304 floggings (45 of which were women), up from a total of 8 in our previous quarterly report.
- 16 former members of the security forces were killed and a further 24 detained (the equivalent numbers for the previous reporting period were 12 killed and 11 detained).
- 59 Afghans were killed by the Taliban in extrajudicial executions after being captured on the battlefield or after being arrested for alleged involvement in or links to armed resistance against the de facto authorities; a further 348 people were detained for allegedly having links to resistance actors.

The reporting period began with an unprecedented surge in protest activity against the Taliban in early October. This mushrooming of public demonstrations was prompted by a brutal suicide attack on 30 September in Kabul that killed at least 52 people and injured 63 more. Most of the victims were girls from the minority Hazara community who were taking a practice university entrance exam. The Taliban's inability or unwillingness to protect these young school girls caused a wave of anger around the country, with protests reported in Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, Paktia, Bamiyan, Kapisa, Daykundi and Nangarhar.

Demonstrations continued throughout October, but a crackdown came the following month, with at least 5 high profile women's rights activists arrested and kept in incommunicado detention, despite an international and local outcry. Many other women were detained during protests, but it is impossible to determine exact numbers; local journalists are banned from covering demonstrations and families of those arrested are often too scared and/or unable to talk to international media or human rights NGOs. The wave of arrests in November led to a relative lull in street protests, but this proved temporary; the Taliban's contemptible and un-Islamic December edicts on women's employment and education provoked another surge of demonstrations. These were notable for their geographical spread and also for the participation of men, which was more significant than in earlier protests.

The latest restrictions on women's education and employment mark a new low for the de facto authorities. Banning women from working with NGOs whilst banning mixing between the sexes will make it impossible for aid agencies to reach those most in need. Women will not be able to take part in needs assessment surveys or access desperately needed food aid and other assistance. The large number of female headed households after decades of war means this potentially affects far more than 50% of those in need: children living in female headed households will also suffer. Banning women from education has obvious and severe ramifications for the economic situation, not to mention on crucial services such as healthcare.

The calamitous implications of the latest rulings prompted several major international NGOs to suspend operations. Organisations including the International Rescue Committee, Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council announced that it was impossible for them to continue without their female staff. The Taliban restrictions could not be happening at a worse time as the economic crisis and harsh winter months make finding sufficient food a daily challenge for millions of Afghans.

Another key human rights setback during this reporting period was the formal re-imposition of so-called Sharia punishments. Periodic reports of floggings and stonings have been recorded ever since the Taliban retook power.¹ However, Afghanistan has seen a surge in corporal punishment since Taliban Supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada in November called on judges to fully implement Sharia law including corporal punishment and executions.² The supreme leader's edict resulted in a raft of reported public punishments, many of which were carried out in public. A total of 304 floggings were logged in SRMO's database, 45 of which were carried out against women. The total number is likely far higher than this.

Other key human rights concerns discussed in previous SRMO quarterly reports continued to be reported. These include the ongoing killings and detentions of former members of the security forces under the previous government, and large numbers of killings and detentions of people accused of involvement in resistance activities. Between October and December, 16 former security forces were killed and a further 24 detained; almost a year and a half after the Taliban takeover, killings and disappearances of former security forces not only continue but have increased in number (the equivalent numbers for the July to September reporting period were 12 killed and 11 detained).

Meanwhile at least 59 people were reportedly killed by Taliban soldiers during the reporting period in the course of the Taliban's clampdown on armed resistance. These deaths do not include people killed in combat, but rather people executed after being captured during fighting, or people who died under torture or were executed after being arrested on suspicion of having links with the resistance. In addition, at least 348 people were detained on suspicion of having links to or being involved in armed resistance. In many cases local men are rounded up after attacks on the Taliban; many of those detained have no connection whatsoever with resistance activities but are merely in the wrong place at the wrong time.

¹ See for example <http://srmo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/SRMO%20Civic%20Space%20Quarterly%20Jul-Sep%202022.pdf>

² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63624400>

I. Legal and governance framework

The Supreme Leader’s instruction in November 2022 that judges should impose full Sharia law has resulted in a wave of corporal punishment taking place across the country (see also section VII below). However, there has been no corresponding effort to clarify how judicial rulings are made, which punishments should be issued for which crimes, or what if any rights the accused should have. Taliban officials’ standard response that the legal system is decided by sharia ignores the fact that the latter is not codified and is open to widely diverse interpretations.

Although the Supreme Court is functioning on some level and issues periodic statements, the legal system remains ad hoc with no due process for Afghan citizens. Afghans detained by the Taliban appear to have no rights whatsoever. Families are most often unable to find out where detained relatives are being held, what they have been arrested for, or what if any legal process is taking place. Afghans detained for protesting against the Taliban often report being held in unofficial detention centres in extremely poor conditions. People who have been detained in Taliban prisons report systematic beatings and torture, including electric shocks.

II. Operating environment for civil society: Freedom of expression, association and public assembly severely curtailed

There was a significant jump in human rights abuses targeting civil society in the last quarter of 2022 compared to the previous reporting period. From October to December, SRMO’s database logged **88** reported abuses (killings and arrests) targeting civil society (including civil society activists, local media, teachers, social media influencers and NGOs). The equivalent figure for July to September was **25**.

These 88 cases are those for which we have sufficient information to log them in the SRMO database; they are likely only a small proportion of the total number of incidents taking place around the country. Many dozens more protesters and activists have been arrested, beaten and harassed overall. Between October and December 2022, the following reported incidents were logged (further details about all of these cases are provided in the Database Summary below):

- 5 killings of members of civil society, 4 of which were Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and the 5th was a female teacher
- 5 targeted arrests of Women’s Human Rights Defenders
- 4 male civil society activists detained during the launch of a new women’s organization
- 2 university lecturers arrested for supposed criticism of the Taliban
- 2 university lecturers arrested for wearing western style suits
- 2 NGO workers detained who had been working for the Red Crescent
- 1 head of a local professional association detained for unknown reasons
- 1 civil society activist arrested in Daikundi province, reportedly for their involvement in the ‘Stop Hazara Genocide’ online campaign
- 1 civil society activist originally from Panjshir province who had been involved in gathering aid for poor families detained
- 36 arrests of women and 2 of men during demonstrations on women’s rights
- 14 arrests of media workers
- 13 arrests of social media content producers

These incidents highlight the Taliban's determination to obstruct Afghans' fundamental rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly. The de facto authorities use violence and intimidation to silence civil society and deny Afghans the opportunity to meet, organize or disseminate their views. The clampdown has not only affected people involved in organized civil society activities; individuals expressing frustrations with the current circumstances in Afghanistan on social media have also faced incommunicado detention and other abuses.

III. Protest activity

As described above, early October saw an unprecedented number of public protests following a devastating attack on a girls' education centre in the capital city. Despite the horrific nature of the suicide attack, the Taliban showed a zero tolerance policy towards related protests – even classmates of those who had been killed in the bombing were met with Taliban violence when they gathered to commemorate their lost friends. Taliban soldiers fired live rounds into the air and hit schoolgirls with batons when a group of students marched in west Kabul the day after the attack.³

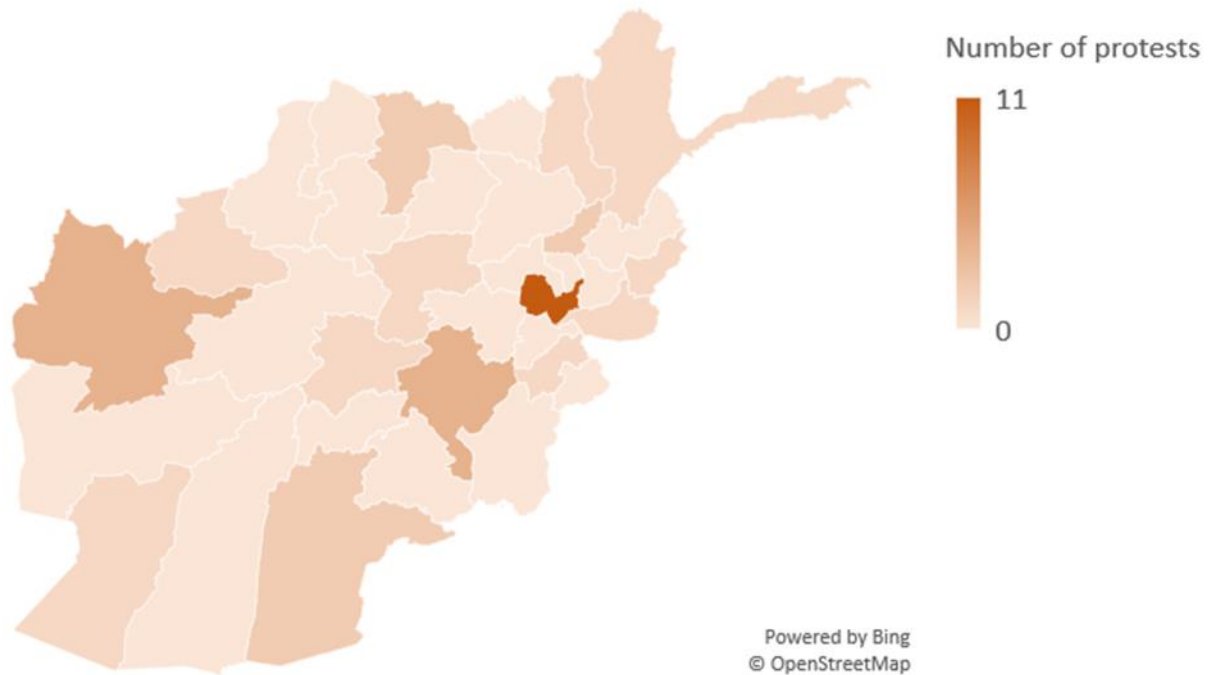
Women's protests continued across the country during the reporting period. The Taliban responded with arrests, pepper spray, water cannon, live bullets, whippings and beatings. In one unconfirmed incident reported by credible sources, two women medical students were allegedly killed after being beaten by Taliban troops during a protest in the eastern city of Jalalabad on 24 December. The fact that this alleged incident received no coverage in the local media highlights the challenge of verifying information in the current environment, where Taliban officials intimidate journalists into extensive self censorship.

Between October and December, SRMO logged reports of at least 36 specific arrests during rallies of women protesters and two of men protesters. In addition to those cases, SRMO received many additional reports of multiple detentions during demonstrations where no specific number of those arrested was available. It is very difficult to get accurate numbers of arrests. Journalists are officially banned from covering rallies, protesters often have their phones confiscated by the Taliban, and those that don't are too scared to contact their friends and colleagues in case those phones are in Taliban hands. Reports often state that 'several' women were detained; sometimes women are just temporarily detained as a means of ending the protest, while other protesters are taken to detention centres and kept for days, weeks or months in some cases.

When protesters are detained, there is no due process; families in the vast majority of cases have no communication with prisoners and do not even know where they are being held. Testimonies of former detainees suggest that they are most often held by Taliban intelligence, often in buildings that are not designed to be detention facilities. Former detainees mention being held by departments 40 and 90, which are apparently responsible for investigating terrorism and crimes against national security.

³ <https://rukshana.com/en/female-protesters-dispersed-during-a-rally-in-kabul>

Number of protests by province



In addition to rounding up protesters in the streets, Taliban intelligence has also conducted targeted arrests of women they consider to be key leaders or organisers. SRMO’s database recorded at least 5 such detentions between October and December.

This quarter has seen the emergence of what appears to be a new trend, in which female Taliban supporters try to blend in with groups of protesters. In some cases they have harassed journalists trying to cover the protests, taking names and issuing threats. In another case, pro-Taliban women infiltrated a crowd of women protesters and then helped Taliban soldiers to detain activists.

As mentioned above, the Taliban’s announcements in December that banned women from working for NGOs or attending universities provoked a new round of demonstrations. These were notable for the involvement of larger groups of men, who had previously taken part in only very small numbers. Male students were reportedly arrested for protesting against restrictions on women in at least four locations in December; incidents were reported in Kabul, Nimroz, Ghazni and Takhar, though specific numbers of people detained are not available. Many other groups of male students reportedly refused to take their university exams as a way of expressing their opposition to the university ban. In addition, dozens of male university staff have reportedly resigned their posts to register their anger, one even doing so live on national television.

IV. New media restrictions

The de facto authorities on 3 October banned two newspapers for distributing ‘false propaganda’.⁴ An official from the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology published a tweet stating the Hasht-e Subh Daily and Zawia News outlets had been blocked.⁵ Hasht-e-Subh had been operating since 2007 and had the largest circulation of any Afghan newspaper until the Taliban seized power in August 2021.⁶

Further bans followed in December, when Taliban officials announced that Radio Azadi (run by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) and Voice of America’s (VoA) Dari and Pashto services would no longer be permitted.⁷ Abdul Haq Hammad, Director of publications at the Ministry of Culture and Information, stated on Twitter that Radio Azadi had been blocked nationwide and that VoA was suspended in 13 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, with no explanation as to why it had been banned in those particular areas. The broadcasters were accused of having violated ‘journalistic principles’ and spreading ‘biased’ news.

V. Incidents targeting media workers

During the reporting period, SRMO documented 14 detentions of media workers. In one example, at least 3 journalists were arrested while they were covering an event held by a women’s organization on 3 November. In October, two radio journalists were reportedly arrested in the southern province of Kandahar on charges of having broadcast ‘anti-Taliban’ material. In November, the head of a television station in eastern Afghanistan was detained after his channel broadcast a report about corruption by local Taliban officials. In December, a radio journalist and his brother were detained for three days in Takhar province for unknown reasons.

In addition to arrests of traditional media workers, SRMO received reports of the detention of 13 YouTubers/social media influencers and their team members between October and December. They have all since been released but some had their equipment destroyed or confiscated, and were threatened to stop their activities. Meanwhile, high profile Youtube personality Ajmal Haqiqi who was arrested with three colleagues back in April 2022 remains in detention and is reported to be suffering from poor health; local reports in October suggested that he had been transferred to a security hospital.

In addition to the bans on media outlets mentioned above, many other media agencies continue to close because of threats, intimidation, the need to extensively self censor and the difficult financial situation. In one example, a private news agency based in Kabul closed down in December after receiving multiple warnings from the Taliban’s intelligence agency. The agency’s director had received repeated telephone threats not to publish any reports that were critical of the de facto authorities. Journalists are also frequently blocked from locations where bombings or other security incidents have occurred, making it

⁴ <https://cpj.org/2022/10/taliban-shuts-down-two-news-websites-in-afghanistan/#:~:text=The%20Hasht%2De%20Subh%20daily,deactivated%20their%20website%20domain%20name>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/Anayatalokozay/status/1576833432910409728?s=20&t=OvKNJUzoGA0NZ86RpOzhRg>

⁶ <https://rsf.org/en/taliban-have-entered-new-phase-their-media-war-closure-two-major-afghan-news-websites>

⁷ <https://rsf.org/en/taliban-step-war-media-silencing-fm-broadcasts-radio-azadi-and-voa-s>

very difficult for the media to assess the true scale of casualties and damage. Examples include a bombing at a mosque in Kabul on 5 October and an attack at a madrassa (religious school) in northern Samangan province on 31 November.

Foreign journalists and their crews have also been harassed, detained and beaten by Taliban troops. A number of international reporters have said that obtaining visas and permits is getting more difficult.⁸ There have been rumours in recent months that the de facto authorities are in the process of establishing a committee to screen visa requests from international media.⁹

VI. Violence against women

Violence against women continued in many different forms during the last quarter of 2022. During the reporting period, SRMO registered reports of 20 murders of women, 11 of which were allegedly killed by members of the Taliban. In addition 9 sexual assaults were logged in the database, all of which were blamed on Taliban members.

A further 12 women and girls reportedly died from suicide, some of which took place after women or girls had been or were just about to be subjected to forced marriage. As with all the numbers in this report, the cases logged here represent just a sample and the true numbers of cases are likely to be far higher. Mechanisms established during the former government to provide protection, refuge and legal remedies to women victims of domestic violence have been dismantled. This total absence of institutional support likely also contributed to the high number of suicides.

In a deeply worrying development, an Afghan woman who had accused a senior Taliban official of sexual assault and forced marriage was reportedly kidnapped on 11 November from Pakistan, where she had tried to find refuge. The woman, whose case was mentioned in SRMO's previous quarterly report, was reportedly transported back to Afghanistan after her kidnap and is allegedly being held in a Taliban detention facility. While the facts of the case remain unconfirmed, a group of Kabul University students have written to UNAMA appealing for help to get her released.

VII. Morality arrests /corporal punishment

The Supreme Leader's order in November that judges start imposing sharia punishments resulted in a huge increase in reports of corporal punishment, particularly floggings. SRMO's database logged a total of 304 floggings (45 of which were women) between October and December, up from a total of 8 in our previous quarterly report.

Floggings were carried out as punishment for a range of alleged crimes including theft and kidnapping, but a large proportion were handed down for so-called 'moral' crimes such as wearing the wrong clothing, talking on the phone with someone of the opposite sex, extra marital relationships and drinking alcohol. Many floggings took place in public and were attended by large crowds, though local media was in many

⁸ <https://twitter.com/stephglinski/status/1579468691351425024>

⁹ [Obaidullah Baheer on Twitter: "#Taliban leadership, seemingly upset with MoFA's performance pertaining to foreign coverage, have formed a commission for approving foreign media permits in #Afghanistan. The commission has representatives of four different bodies in it. Many permits have been denied recently 1/" / Twitter](#)

cases prevented from taking photos or videos of the events. While women are most often the target of punishments related to appearance and dress codes, men can also fall foul of Taliban regulations. A young man in Ghor province reported in late December that he had been beaten in public by Taliban soldiers because he had shaved his beard.

One man was shot dead in a public execution on 7 December in Farah province; the chief justice and deputy prime minister of the de facto authorities were present to observe the so-called ‘qisas’ punishment that was held at a sports stadium.¹⁰ One woman was reportedly sentenced to death by stoning in December also in Farah, but it was not clear from the reports whether this sentence was actually carried out. Another woman who had been sentenced to death by stoning in October in Ghor province was reportedly found hanged before the sentence could be carried out.

VIII. Abuses targeting former security forces and police

Attacks on people who worked for the army, intelligence services and various police forces that were set up under the previous government continued over the last quarter. 16 killings of former security force personnel or their close relatives by the Taliban were logged in SRMO’s database between October and December (up from 12 during the previous reporting period). A further 24 former security force personnel were detained (more than double the 11 detentions reported between July and September), making a mockery of the Taliban’s supposed ‘general amnesty’ for people who worked under the former government. Many of those detained are effectively disappeared, with relatives having no idea where they are being held or if they are still alive.

The Taliban claim that ‘revenge’ killings of people who worked for the police or army under the previous government is not a centrally directed policy and is not being condoned by the Taliban leadership. However, while they have made some arrests of Taliban soldiers responsible for revenge attacks, they have made no concerted effort to stamp out the practice. Killings of this type continue to be reported on a weekly basis and the numbers logged in this quarterly report are notably higher than in the previous reporting period.

IX. Abuses linked to resistance activities

Attacks on the Taliban by the National Resistance Front (NRF) and other resistance groups continued during the reporting period. These have caused significant Taliban casualties and the de facto authorities have been accused of retaliating with serious abuses against resistance fighters and ordinary civilians.

During the reporting period, SRMO received credible reports of extra judicial killings, summary executions, arbitrary detentions, torture and forced evictions in the provinces of Panjshir, Badakhshan, Kabul, Takhar, Kapisa, Baghlan and Faryab.

Reported cases logged in the SRMO database during this period include 59 alleged extra judicial executions and 348 detentions. Extensive restrictions on both local and international media mean that many of these developments are taking place in an information blackout.

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/12/afghanistan-un-experts-call-taliban-immediately-halt-public-floggings-and>

X. Plight of Afghan civil society in limbo in neighbouring countries

Many members of Afghan civil society have been forced to flee Afghanistan because of serious threats to life from the de facto authorities. While some have been able to travel on to safe countries, many others remain stuck in limbo in neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Iran. Visa allocations for Afghans from Afghanistan's main international partners have been disappointingly low, meaning that many have been unable to find safe onward pathways. A group of Afghan journalists held a protest on 23 December in Pakistan to draw attention to the fact they had not been granted visas by any third countries and expressing their concern that they were being pressured to return to Afghanistan by the Pakistani authorities.

XI. Annex

SRMO Database Summary: July to September 2022

HR abuses targeting civil society	
<i>Incident Type</i>	<i>Cases¹¹</i>
Killings of HRDs, CSAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 22 Oct: The body of a women's rights activist was found in west Kabul. She had reportedly been raped and beaten before her death. Local reports said she had been kidnapped by unknown armed men in the vicinity of Habibia High school the week before. She had been in the process of getting paperwork together to seek refuge in Iran. ● 24 Dec: Two women medical students were allegedly killed after being beaten by Taliban troops during a protest in the eastern city of Jalalabad on 24 December. This incident remains unconfirmed but came from reliable local sources. ● 26 Dec: The body of a woman civil society activist was reportedly handed over to her family by the Taliban; she had reportedly been kidnapped from the capital Kabul 1.5 months before.
Detentions of HRDs, CSAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6 Oct: A CSA who was a vocal women's rights activist and had been active in the online Stop Hazara Genocide campaign was detained by the Taliban in central Afghanistan. ● 3 Nov: Taliban forces arrested a high profile WHRD and four male colleagues during a press conference in Kabul. The gathering was being held to announce the launch of a new women's movement. ● 8 Nov: The family of a CSA and writer reported that he had been detained by the Taliban in Kabul 2 months ago. They had been warned not to disclose his arrest to the media. He was reportedly arrested while gathering aid for poor families in Panjshir province. ● 8 Nov: A WHRD was detained with her father at a checkpoint in Kabul. The WHRD had protested the arrest of her colleagues on 3 November. Taliban troops reportedly inspected her phone during a routine checkpoint stop and

¹¹ Unless specified otherwise, these case details come from the SRMO database (see Methodology section below). See <https://srmo.org/> for further details about the organization.

	<p>took her into custody. Local reports on 8 Dec suggested that she had been tortured and had been transferred to hospital for medical treatment but that her family were not allowed to visit her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 11 Nov: Taliban troops arrested a WHRD in Kabul who had been involved in protests calling for girls' access to education. ● 15 Nov: Officials from the Taliban intelligence service reportedly arrested a noted women's rights activist in Kabul. She posted a voice message on social media saying that the Taliban were at her residence and then disappeared. ● 8 Dec: The family of another WHRD reported that she had been detained on 3 Nov and that they had not been allowed to see her since.
Detentions of NGO workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 22 Oct: Two Kabul-based employees of the Afghan Red Crescent Society were reportedly imprisoned for 1 month for unknown reasons.
Other civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10 Oct: A woman teacher was reportedly sexually assaulted and then killed by a Taliban soldier in Kapisa province ● 13 Oct: Two lecturers at a private university in south-eastern Afghanistan were reportedly detained by the Ministry for the Prevention of Vice and the Promotion of Virtue for wearing western style suits. ● 29 Nov: The head of a local professional association was reportedly arrested, beaten and imprisoned in eastern Afghanistan. The reason for the detention is unknown. ● 4 Dec: A university lecturer and political analyst who had been critical of the de facto authorities was arrested during a dawn raid on his home in the capital Kabul. ● 4 Dec: A university lecturer was detained in eastern Afghanistan after reportedly posting a comment on social media about girls being deprived of education by the Taliban.
Detentions of media workers by Taliban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 23 Oct: The head of a local radio station and one of his employees were detained in Kandahar; the Taliban reportedly accused them of criticizing the de facto authorities. ● 3 Nov: Three journalists were reportedly detained in the Dasht-e Barchi area in western Kabul. The journalists had been covering an event by a women's organization when they were apparently detained by Taliban intelligence officers. ● 24 Nov: A journalist was detained by Taliban intelligence forces in northern Balkh province. He had reportedly published criticism of the de facto authorities. He was tortured during his detention and required hospital treatment for his injuries. ● 30 Nov: Taliban intelligence officials arrested the head of a local television station in eastern Afghanistan. He had reportedly posted criticism of corruption by local Taliban officials on social media prior to his arrest

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 9 Dec: A radio journalist in northern Afghanistan was detained with one of his brothers and held for several days, during which time they were beaten and tortured. ● 22 Dec: Three journalists were reportedly detained in Kabul while they were covering a demonstration by women protesters about girls being banned from universities. ● 23 Dec: Two recently graduated media students were detained in the capital Kabul while they were practicing a piece to camera.
<p>YouTubers/ Influencers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4 Nov: Taliban officials reportedly detained a group of 5 people in Uruzgan province who had been producing content for a social media channel. They were held for several days for interrogation. ● 8 Nov: A female YouTuber was reportedly arrested in Kabul and held for several hours. Her brother who she was with at the time of her arrest was also detained. They were released after she promised to stop producing social media content. ● 8 Nov: 6 YouTubers were arrested in Kabul when their office was raided by armed Taliban; the detainees' filming equipment was reportedly destroyed.
<p>HR abuses targeting former security force personnel</p>	
<p>Extrajudicial killings of former security forces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 8 Oct: A former policeman was killed in Tirin kot, Uruzgan Province; local sources reported that Taliban shot and killed him in his home. ● 9 Oct: A former police officer was killed in Kandahar Province in an attack by unknown armed men. ● 11 Oct: Taliban soldiers reportedly arrested two young men from their homes in Kunar province. They were both beaten and then shot dead. One of the victims was a former Special Forces soldier during the previous government. ● 14 Oct: A former officer in a special commando unit during the former government was shot by Taliban forces in Kabul. He was reportedly detained while attending a wedding ceremony. ● 16 Oct: Local sources reported that Taliban soldiers publicly shot and killed a former military officer in Kunar Province. ● 22 Oct: A former army general was killed in front of the Taliban intelligence headquarters in Taloqan, Takhar province. ● 7 Nov: An officer who worked for the National Directorate of Security (NDS) during the previous government reportedly died in Kunar province while being tortured by the Taliban. ● 16 Nov: A former police officer died after being tortured for several days by the Taliban. He had been summoned and arrested a few days earlier in Kunar province. ● 24 Nov: Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a former police officer in Farah province.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 25 Nov: The body of a former soldier was found in Laghman province with multiple signs of torture. Taliban forces had reportedly arrested the victim several weeks before he was found. ● 30 Nov: Taliban shot and killed a former government soldier in Faryab province. ● 1 Dec: The body of a woman who had worked in the general directorate of investigations under the previous government was found in an abandoned area of Kabul. Local sources said she had been killed by the Taliban. ● 3 Dec: A former military imam was reportedly shot dead by Taliban soldiers in the northern city of Kunduz. ● 12 Dec: The bodies of a former military officer and his taxi driver were handed to their families; the two had been arrested by the Taliban two months ago. The killings took place in Laghman province. ● 16 Dec: The body of a former officer in the National Directorate of Security was found in the mountains in Kandahar province. The victim’s relatives stated that he had been kidnapped and killed by the Taliban. ● 18 Dec: Unidentified gunmen killed a former policeman near his home in Sar-e Paul province.
Detentions of former security forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10 Oct: A former policewoman was reportedly abducted from a camp for displaced people. ● 12 Oct: A former National Directorate of Security officer was detained while he was attending his son’s wedding in Kabul. ● 14 Oct: A former aide to foreign forces during the previous government was arrested and tortured by Taliban intelligence in Balkh province. ● 15 Oct: Two former military officers were reportedly arrested in Kabul. ● 30 Oct: A former army general under the previous government was reportedly arrested in front of his family in Kabul. No charges were presented to his family and his current whereabouts are unknown. ● 7 Nov: Taliban shot and then arrested a former police officer in Parwan province. ● 10 Nov: Local sources declared that the Taliban have arrested a former military officer and a family member of another former soldier in Badakhshan province. The former soldier recently returned home from Iran. ● 17 Nov: Two former soldiers were arrested in Kapisa province. ● 22 Nov: Five former soldiers from Panjshir were arrested in the Karteh Sakhi area of Kabul. They reportedly received a message from a friend asking them to meet him, but were then detained. ● 22 Nov: A former aide to foreign forces was reportedly arrested by the Taliban in Faryab province on charges of collaborating with the CIA. He had reportedly returned from Pakistan three months ago. ● 28 Nov: Taliban intelligence arrested two former army officers in Jawzjan province. They were reportedly taken to Balkh prison and then transferred to Kabul.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 11 Dec: Three former military officers were arrested in Panjshir province. Taliban troops accused the three of having relations with resistance forces. ● 21 Dec: A former military officer was detained alongside a student by Taliban forces in Parwan province. ● 21 Dec: A former military officer was detained by the Taliban in the Dara district of Panjshir province. ● 23 Dec: Local reports said that a former police officer had been detained by the Taliban 10 days ago and his family had no information about his whereabouts. ● 30 Dec: A former military officer was reportedly arrested by Taliban intelligence in Kandahar. He was detained at night time at his home.
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SRMO

The [Safety and Risk Mitigation Organization \(SRMO\)](#) is an Afghan-led NGO. It was established in May 2013 to provide protection and training for grassroots Human Rights Defenders (HRDs). SRMO’s main objective is to empower HRDs so they can safely continue their crucial work. SRMO has particularly focused its assistance on local and grassroots’ HRDs and WHRDs, recognizing their utmost vulnerability as being at the frontline of defending human rights.

SRMO monitors and tracks human rights abuses affecting human rights activists and civil society. The organization also provides regular training on Hostile Environment, Security, Digital and Cyber security, First aid and other topics. In addition, SRMO distributes regular and vital security information and mitigation advice to hundreds of HRDs and WHRDs in the provinces across Afghanistan. The organization provides emergency assistance, including emergency relocation and medical assistance for HRDs at risk. Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, SRMO has continued to provide support both to HRDs inside the country and to those who have fled and are now living in exile.

Methodology

This quarterly report is designed to provide a brief summary of the situation for human rights defenders in Afghanistan between October and December 2022, along with an overview of the broader human rights environment. It is based on information and cases gathered as part of SRMO’s ongoing human rights monitoring work. SRMO maintains a database of incidents and rights abuses affecting human rights activists, civil society more broadly, and Afghan civilians. Cases are only included in the SRMO database if they have been verified via SRMO’s networks inside Afghanistan.