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<http://www.rsf.org/afghanistan-radio-paiman-back-on-the-air-15-07-2011,40640.html>

Asia - Afghanistan

Media support

Radio Paiman back on the air thanks to support from Reporters Without Borders

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Riven by conflicts between influential groups, Afghanistan is one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists. The Taliban, politicians and religious leaders are all guilty of press freedom violations and attacks on journalists. The violations take many forms including threats, physical attacks, arbitrary detentions, abusive trials and convictions, and kidnapping.

The violence against **Radio Paiman**, an independent radio station in the northern province of Baghlan which has received financial support from Reporters Without Borders, is typical of this problem.

Eight gunmen wrecked all of the station's equipment in an attack on 31 January 2011. "After overpowering our night watchman, they systematically destroyed all of our equipment," said station director Shir Mohammad Jahesh, who was one of the first to arrive the next morning. "Nothing was spared. Our computers were smashed to pieces. Our recording studio was ransacked. Our radio console and microphones did not work. They even broke the tables and chairs."

Mr Jahesh added: "The authorities still say they cannot identify those who did it. But, given the nature of the threats we received shortly after the attacks, there is little doubt that it was the Taliban."

Believing the media can play an educational and democratic role, the station broadcast programmes with a significant social dimension. One of them was a phone-in programme that allowed Baghlan province residents to talk about their daily life and problems. Another programme specialized in civic education for young people on such subjects as the right to vote and democratic representation and participation.

The editorial freedom shown by **Radio Paiman** gave rise to threats and reprisals. The violence and destructiveness of last January's attack was nonetheless unprecedented. "In just a few minutes, they wiped out what it had taken us five years to build."

In view of the scale of the damage, Reporters Without Borders provided the station with grant of \$8,000 to enable it to buy the FM transmitter and antenna system it needed in order to be able to resume broadcasting.

Radio Paiman went back on the air on 15 May, broadcasting from a new, safer location but with its desire for independence and its mission to inform unchanged.

Listen to the message that the station transmitted when it resumed broadcasting:



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