



Commitment of the Candidates of the Presidential Election's Runoff Phase In Support of Free Media and Journalists

Recognizing the development of the media and freedom of speech as one of the major achievements over the last thirteen years and a dire need for democracy; I, one of the two leading candidates of the second round of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Elections commit myself to observing the provisions of this Letter of Commitment in case of my victory in the elections.

Article 1:

Acknowledging that freedom of speech and press freedom is the fundamental pillar of a democratic and civilized society, I respect the value as an non-violable principle and pledge to spare no legal measures to promote and protect press freedom and freedom of speech.

Article 2:

I consider freedom of speech to be the right of the people of Afghanistan and will remain committed to ensuring that right for the people of Afghanistan as enshrined in our national laws.

Article 3:

I will support the rights of media and journalists and will effectively dismiss those cases that are filed against journalists in contrary to the law and based on personal preferences. It is worth mentioning that

President Karzai ordered the closure of such files but this order has not been put into action yet.

Article 4:

I will instruct the relevant judicial bodies to reexamine and investigate cases of murdered and injured journalists and share the results of these investigations with the media and the people of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, I will make decisive and comprehensive efforts to prosecute the culprits of violence through legal channels. In order to pursue this issue, I am committed to establishing a new authoritative commission, the members of which will include, among others, representatives of journalists and media support organizations.

Article 5:

I am committed to taking decisive measures to enforcing the Access to Information Act, which has recently been approved by the parliament and sent to the president for endorsement.

Article 6:

I pledge to incorporate a subject into the curriculum of security forces so that they are educated on how to behave with journalists. Additionally, I will compel officials of security organizations to introduce perpetrators of such violence to judicial bodies for prosecution.

Article 7:

I pledge to develop specific and practical measures to ensure the safety and security of journalists and other media workers. I also pledge to make every effort to prevent violence against journalists and other media workers.

Article 8:

I pledge that I ensure that the Ministry of Information and Culture will carry out its legal responsibilities with respect to the media and journalists in an appropriate and lawful way and, as the regulating body for media outlets, the Ministry will support media outlets and each and every journalist in an equal and efficient manner.

Article 9:

I am committed to taking practical and meaningful action to incorporating specific provisions in the national laws and especially in the Criminal Code on punishing those who exercise violence or intimidation against journalists during or because of their journalistic work.

Article 10:

I pledge to prepare a new law within the framework or in compliance with the country's Labor Law on the job security of journalists and will strive toward its approval.

Article 11:

I pledge to propose to the National Assembly creation of a national trust fund in support of journalists. I will also propose that the authorities of this fund be granted to a joint board that is composed of representatives of private and state-run media outlets and media support organizations. I will protect the trust fund from interference of ministries and other government organizations. Additionally, I will personally strive for the financial enrichment of this fund.

Article 12:

By inscribing my signature hereunder, I one of the two leading candidates of the 2014 Afghan Presidential Elections, hereby express my commitment to fulfilling the provisions of this letter of commitment.