

AFGHAN EXILED JOURNALISTS IN PAKISTAN:

LIVES IN LIMBO



Research on humanitarian needs of exiled Afghan
media workers in Pakistan

AFGHAN EXILED JOURNALISTS IN PAKISTAN: LIVES IN LIMBO

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This research has been produced by Freedom Network in cooperation with DW Akademie
and supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.



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Executive Summary

Exiled Afghan journalists are a sub-set of Afghan refugees who share many problems with other refugees from their country, but they also face some unique challenges due to their professional background. This research highlights challenges faced by the Afghan journalists who have moved to Pakistan after Taliban took over Kabul in August 2021. The report is based on two quantitative surveys. The respondents of the first survey comprised Afghan journalists while respondents of the second survey were Pakistani media persons.

The number of exiled Afghan journalists is hard to determine because statistics about recent Afghan refugees are not available. Exiled Afghan journalists are also a community in transit. Some Afghan journalists have left already Pakistan after getting asylum in some other countries while many others hope to get asylum in a developed country or refugee status in Pakistan.

No less than 30% Afghan journalists among respondents were women – a fact that hints at achievements made by Afghan women in journalism during the democratic era, but it also shows the sense of insecurity among female journalists in Afghanistan and now in Pakistan. No less than 74% respondent said they have spent more than five years in the media profession; 49% have spent 6-10 years, 17% have spent 11-15 years while 9% have put over 15 years in journalism. More than half of the journalists were working with television while 46% worked with radio and 9% worked with newspapers before leaving Afghanistan and heading for Pakistan.

Afghan journalists included in this survey represent the entire spectrum of intra-media key roles and skillsets including Reporter, Editor, News Fixer, Presenter, Analyst, Photographer/Cameraperson, Media Technical Assistant, Producer, General Manager, News Anchor and Executive Director. However, only one third of these journalists think that their current skills will be adequate to allow them to continue as a journalist outside Afghanistan. They indicate requirements of a menu of additional skillsets that can help them resume their interrupted journalism careers even in exile. These skills include Reporting (41%), Digital journalism (32%), Correspondence for foreign media (27%), News Fixing (18%), Photography/Camerawork (14%), News trainer (14%) and Editing (9%).

Respondents expressed the need for assistance in engagement/association with international, Afghan and Pakistani media. They also express a demand for a wide range of technical assistance and resources that can help them adjust to and get familiarized with Pakistan. They also express the need for learning new languages, particularly Urdu and English.

On their part, a large majority of Pakistani journalists (93%) say their medium is willing to showcase journalism content produced by exiled journalists. They appear open to the possibility of various engagements with Afghan journalists and accepting their contributions. They also express the need for assistance to facilitate and support engagement with exiled Afghan journalists.

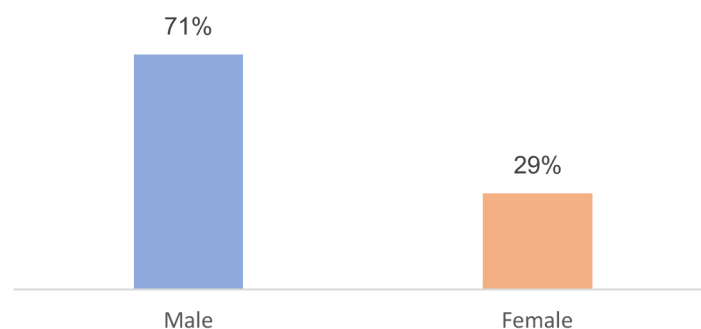
Though positive sentiment prevails regarding openings for Afghan journalists in Pakistani media, no opportunities have been made available to them so far. The nature of their visas is a major hindrance in this regard. Since most Afghan journalists are in Pakistan either on transit or visit visas, they can't find employment in the formal sector. In absence of a clear policy from the government, media houses will remain reluctant to take these journalists on board.

Methodology

Since it was not possible to draw a random sample of Afghan journalists, the research team decided to rely on a sample of convenience. For this research, 35 exiled Afghan journalists were interviewed in three cities i.e., Islamabad (20), Peshawar (14) and Quetta (1) through a structured questionnaire. 14 media persons from regional and national media houses – radio, television, newspapers, digital, press clubs- were also interviewed for the research. This sample was also drawn from Islamabad (4), Peshawar (5) and Quetta (5). Findings in this report are not statistically representative of all Afghan journalists in Pakistan. However, they fill an important information gap and by indicate trends and providing a snapshot of the issues faced by them. Survey of Afghan Journalists:

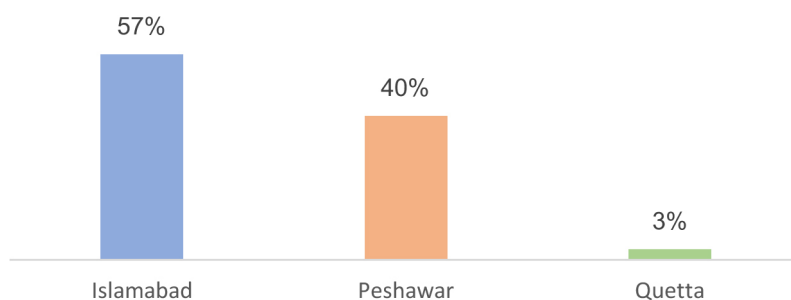
1.1 ABOUT RESPONDENTS

1.1.1 GENDER



While 71% respondents for this survey were men, 29% were women. This sample hints at healthy participation of women in journalism in pre-Taliban Afghanistan. A significant number of them now seem to be exiled to Pakistan.

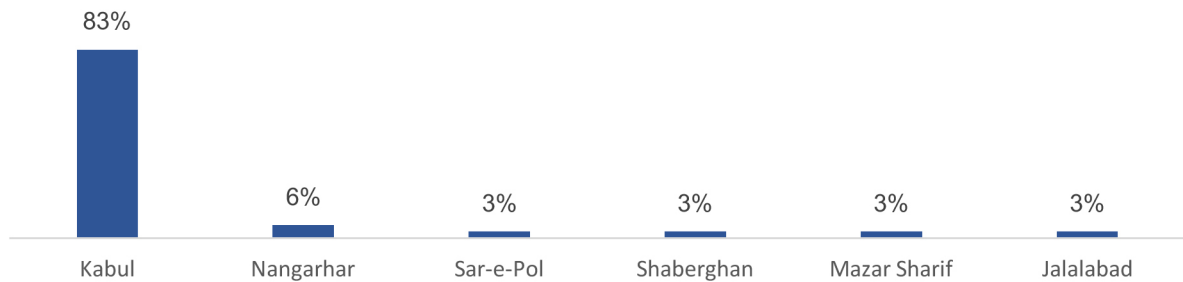
1.1.2 LOCATION



The FN only reached out to exiled Afghan journalists in Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta respectively. According to NGOs working on Afghan refugees, exiled journalists are in these cities.

1.1.3 RESIDENCE IN AFGHANISTAN

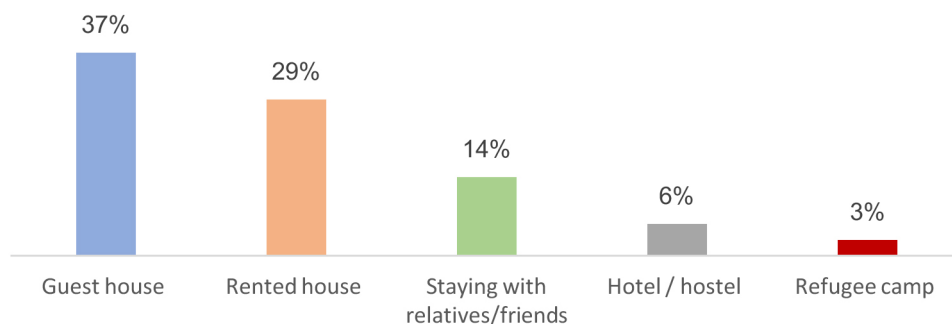
Where were you based in Afghanistan before arriving in Pakistan?



A large majority of respondents (83%) were based in Kabul before arriving in Pakistan. Most others were based in various cities in the North of Afghanistan and some in the southern city of Jalalabad.

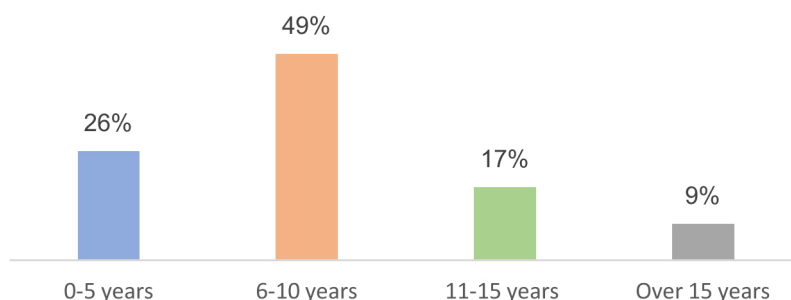
1.1.4 CURRENT LOCATION IN PAKISTAN

What is your current location in Pakistan?



A large segment of respondents is staying in temporary commercial residences including guest houses (37%) and hostels and hostels (6%); 14% are staying with relatives/friends. Only 29% are staying at rented houses.

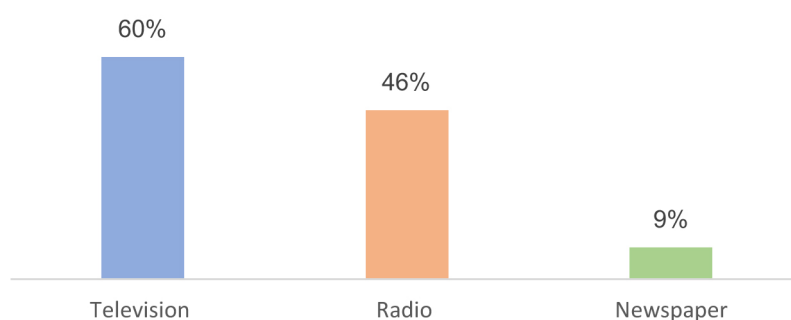
1.1.5 HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE PROFESSION OF JOURNALISM?



No less than 74% respondents have spent more than five years in profession; 49% have spent 6-10 years, 17% have spent 11-15 years while 9% have put over 15 years in journalism.

1.1.6 MEDIA BACKGROUND

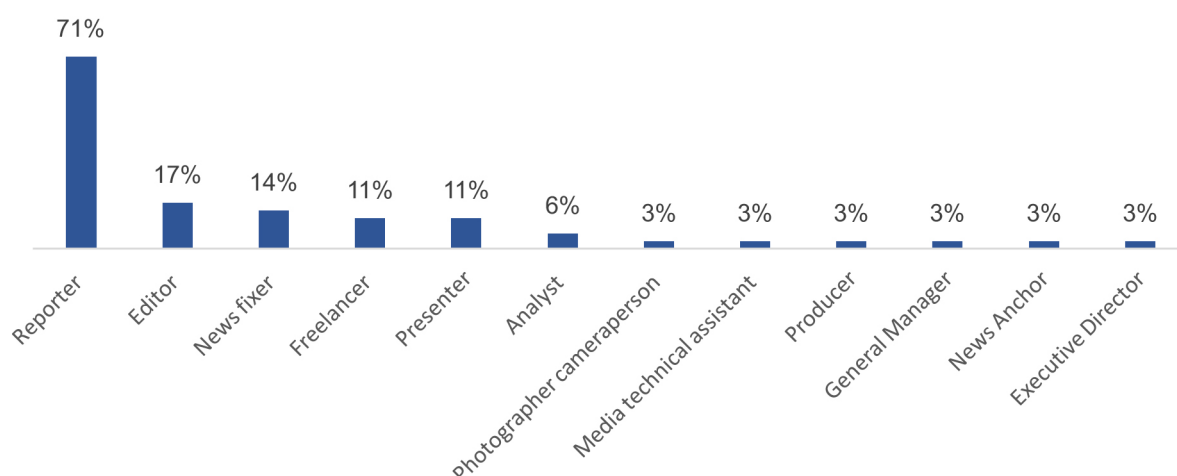
Which of the following mediums have you been working for?



More than half of respondents were working with television while 46% were worked with radio and 9% with newspapers before leaving Afghanistan.

1.1.7 NATURE OF JOB

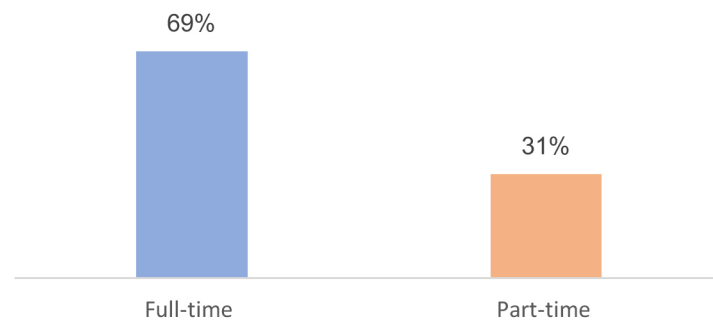
What was the nature of your job in the profession of journalism before 15th of August 2021?



Before migrating to Pakistan, close to two-thirds Afghan journalists who responded to this survey were reporters while remaining performed different duties including Editor, News Fixer, Freelancer, Presenter, Analyst, Photographer/cameraperson, Media Technical Assistant, Producer, General Manager, News Anchor and Executive Director.

3.1.8 EMPLOYMENT STATUS BEFORE 15TH OF AUGUST 2021

What was your employment status before 15th of August 2021?

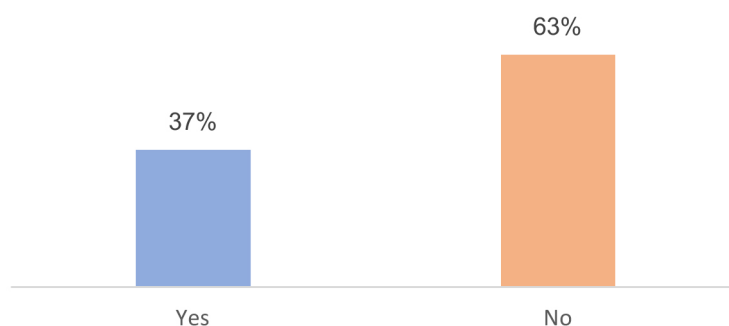


69% respondents used to work full time, while 31% worked part time before 15th of August 2021.

1.2 CHALLENGES, CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS

1.2.1 ADEQUACY OF CURRENT SKILLS

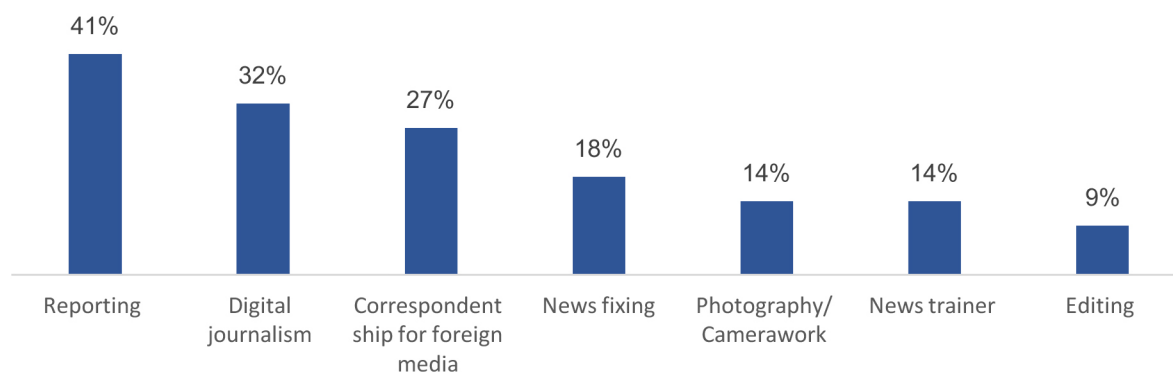
Do you think, your current skills will be adequate to allow you to continue as a journalist outside Afghanistan?



Only 37% respondents think that their current skills are adequate to allow them to continue as a journalist outside Afghanistan.

1.2.2 NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SKILLS

If NO to the above question, which new / additional skills do you need to continue as a journalist outside Afghanistan?



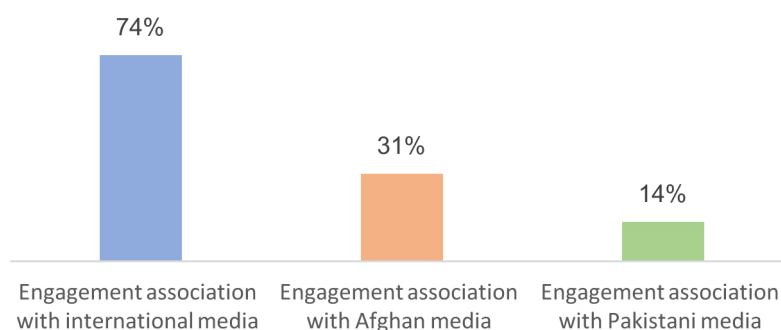
Respondents prioritised various additional skills for continuing to work abroad as journalists. These skills include reporting (41%), Digital journalism (32%), Correspondence for foreign media (27%), News Fixing (18%), Photography/Camerawork (14%), News trainer (14%) and Editing (9%).

IMPLICATION

This indicates a rich menu of additional skillsets that the exiled journalists can be imparted to help them resume their interrupted journalism careers. It also indicates a high demand for professional skillsets among the exiled journalists and a willingness to embrace new journalistic skillsets.

1.2.3 NEED FOR ASSISTANCE TO CONTINUE WORK IN PAKISTAN

If given opportunities to continue your journalism career from Pakistan, what assistance would you need?



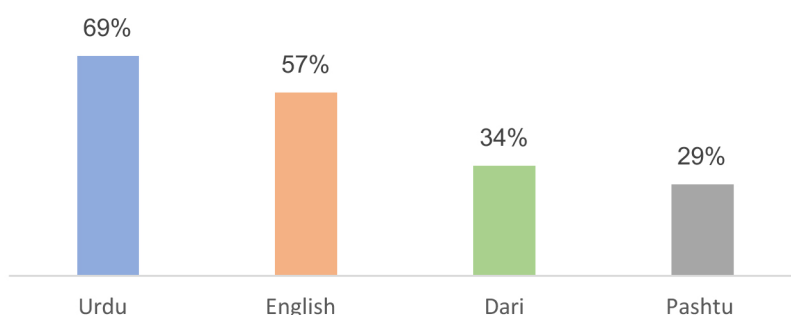
A large majority of respondents (74%) expressed the need for assistance in engagement/association with international media followed by engagement/association with Afghan media (31%) and engagement/association with Pakistani media (14%).

IMPLICATION

This indicates a varied set of possibilities of engagement with various media environments provided the right environment is created for supporting engagements of exiled journalists with relevant media. It also shows that nearly one in five exiled journalist who took part in this survey are willing to work with local media.

1.2.4 ASSISTANCE IN LOCAL LANGUAGES

If open to options of working as a journalist from Pakistan, what assistance would you need?
Local languages training?



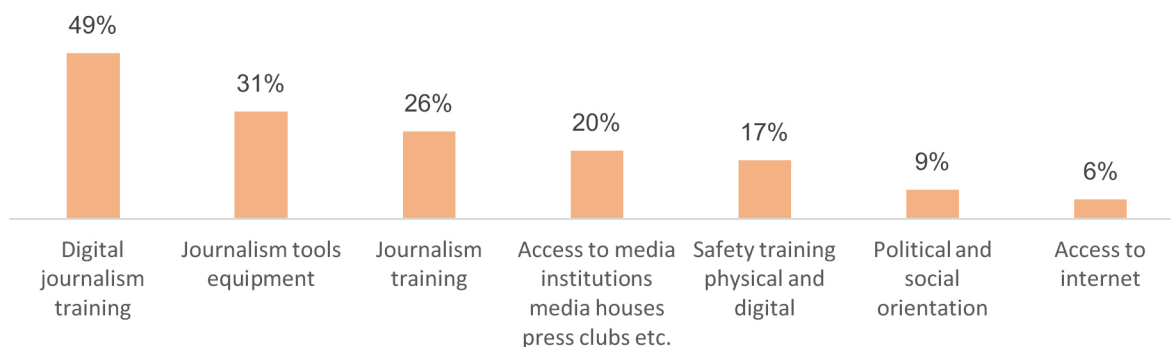
Looking at the option of working as a journalist from Pakistan, most respondents expressed the need for assistance in learning Urdu (69%) and English (57%). Those journalists who probably are not fully bilingual also expressed need for assistance in learning Dari (34%) and Pashtu (29%).

IMPLICATION

This indicates a high degree of interest among exiled journalists who wanted to take to at least one additional language to the ones they know for use in any potentially resumed media careers. In Pakistan language trainers for all these four languages are easy to find. Pakistani media also widely operates in at least three of these four languages. Unfortunately, there is almost no Dari language media in Pakistan.

1.2.5 NEED FOR JOURNALISM RESOURCES

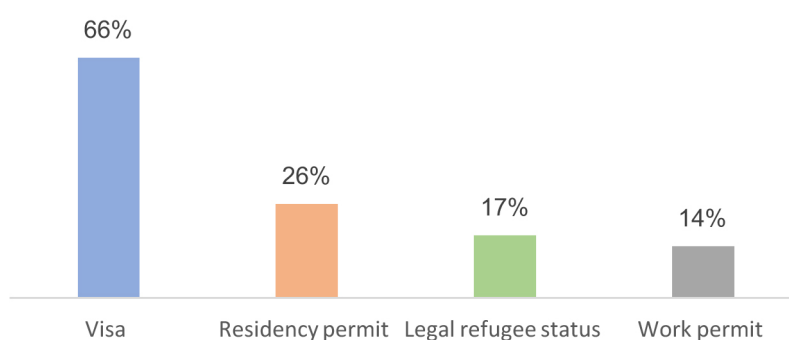
If open to options of working as a journalist from Pakistan, what assistance would you need?
Journalism resources?



Looking at the option of working as a journalist from Pakistan, respondents prioritised the need for assistance in various journalism resources in the following order: Digital journalism training (49%), Journalism tools and equipment (31%), Journalism training (26%), Access to media institutions, media houses, press clubs etc. (20%), Safety training-physical and digital (17%), Political and social orientation (9%) and Access to internet (6%).

1.2.6 CHALLENGES OF JOURNALISTS AS REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

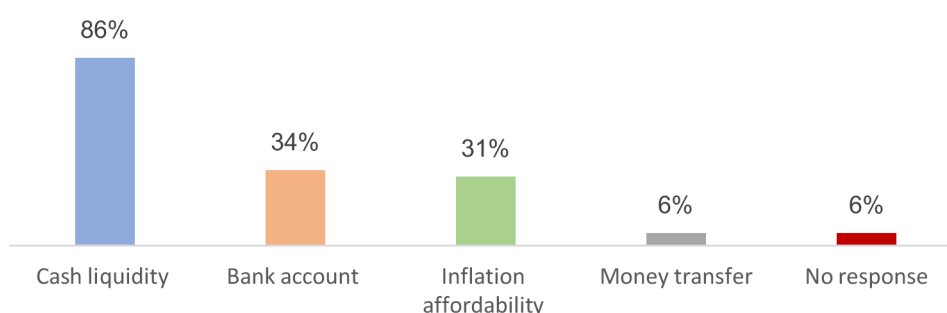
What legal challenges do you / your family face as a refugee in Pakistan?



Afghan journalists listed various problems they are facing as refugees in Pakistan including visa problems (66%), Residency permits (26%), Legal refugee status (17%), and work permit (14%).

1.2.7 FINANCIAL CHALLENGES AS REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

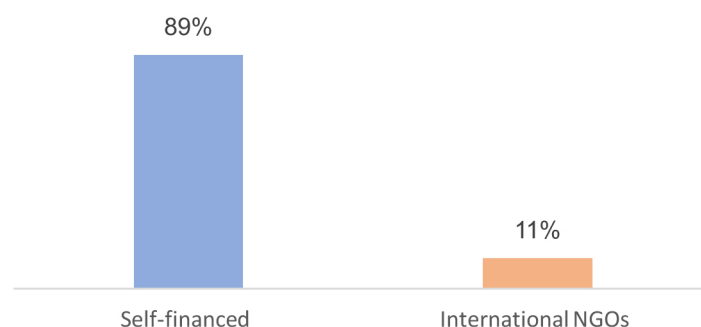
What financial challenges do you / your family face as a refugee in Pakistan?



Afghan journalists and their families said that they are facing various financial challenges including Cash liquidity (86%), Bank account opening (34%), Inflation affordability (31%) and Money transfer (6%).

1.2.8 CURRENT MEANS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

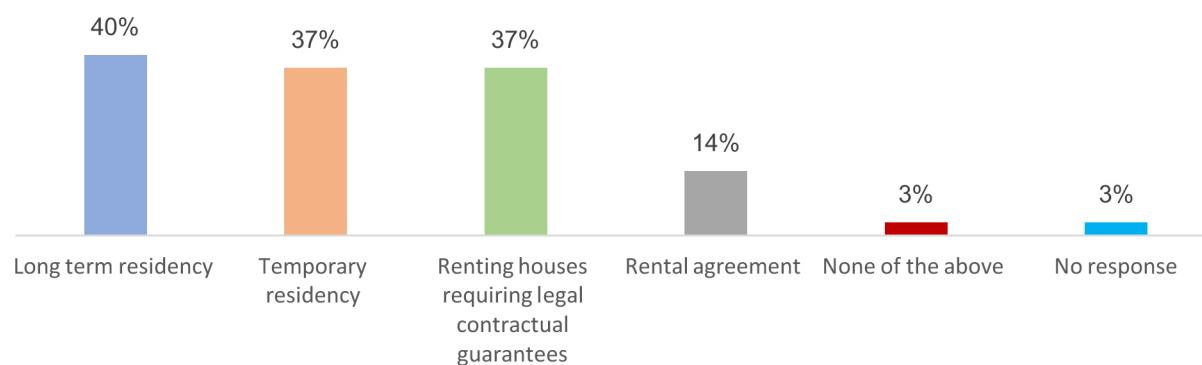
What are your current means of financial support in Pakistan?



A large majority of respondents (89%) are relying on their own resources in Pakistan, while a small minority (11%) have found support from international NGOs.

1.2.9 HOUSING CHALLENGES

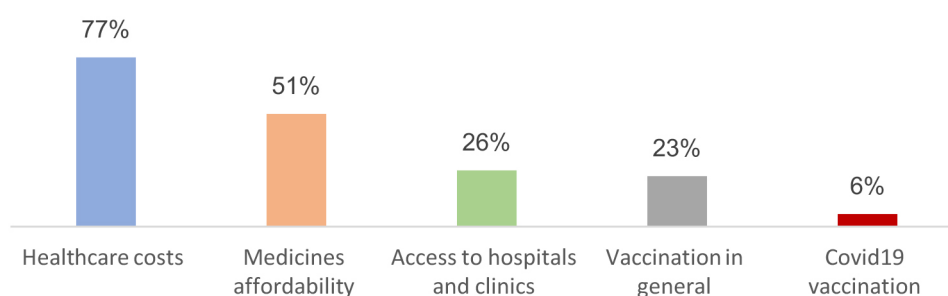
What housing challenges do you / your family face as a refugee in Pakistan?



Like other newly arrived Afghan refugees in Pakistan, respondents face various housing challenges including problems in long term residency (40%), Temporary residency (37%), Renting houses requiring legal contractual guarantees (37%) and Rental agreement (14%).

1.2.10 HEALTH RELATED CHALLENGES

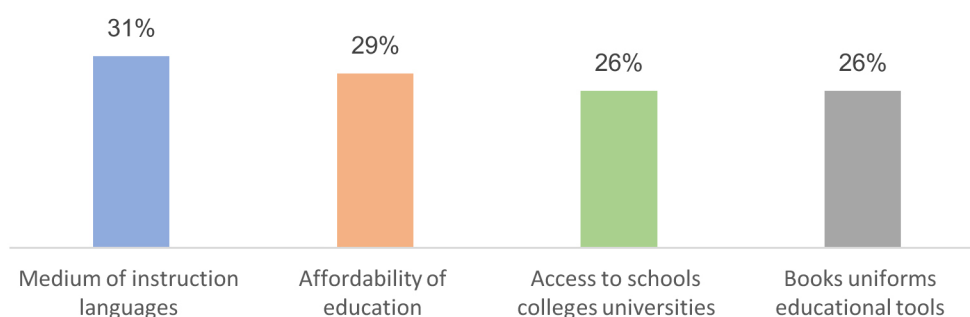
What health related challenges do you / your family face as a refugee in Pakistan?



Afghan journalists and their families face various health related challenges including Healthcare cost (77%), Medicines affordability (51%), Access to hospitals and clinics (26%), Vaccination in general (23%) and Covid-19 vaccination (6%).

1.2.11 EDUCATION RELATED CHALLENGES

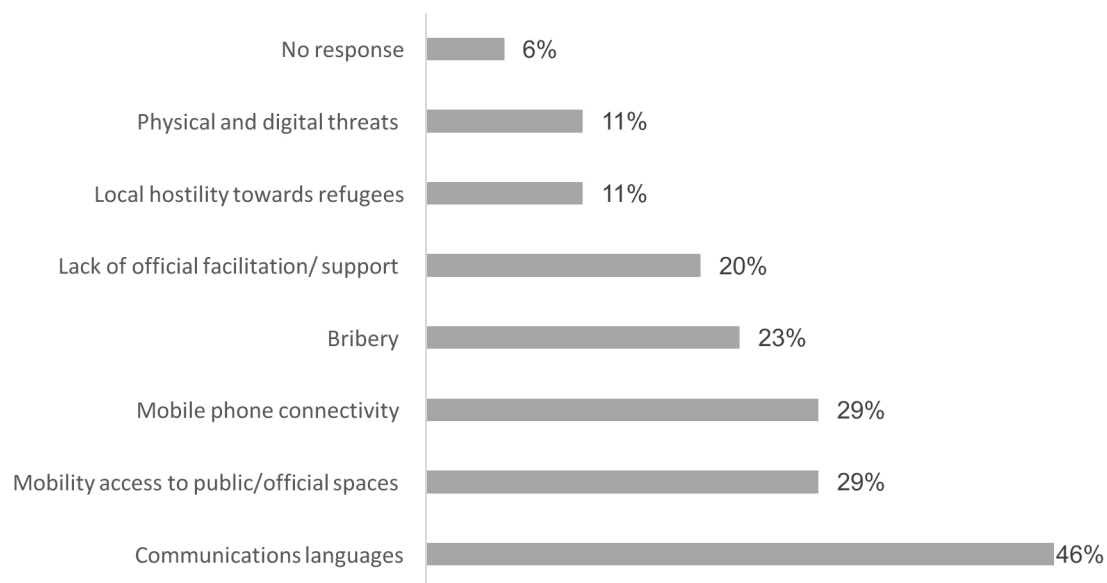
What education related challenges do you / your family face as a refugee in Pakistan?



Respondents and their families face various challenges in continuing their education in Pakistan including medium of instruction languages (31%), Affordability of education (29%), Access to schools, colleges, universities (26%) and Books uniforms, educational tools (26%).

1.2.12 CHALLENGES AS REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

What social challenges do you / your family face as a refugee in Pakistan?



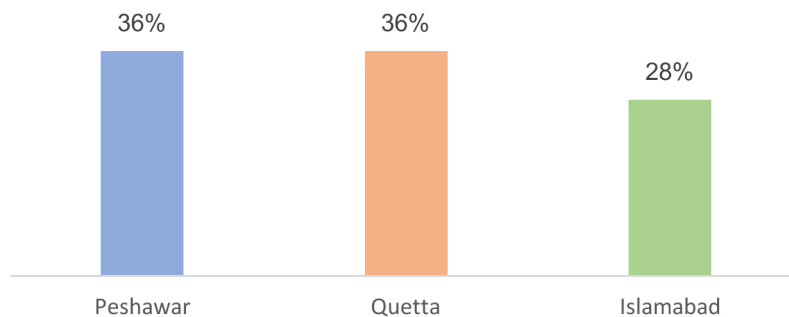
As refugees, Afghan journalists face various challenges in Pakistan including communication/ languages (46%), Mobility, access to public/official spaces (29%), Mobile phone connectivity (29%), Bribery (23%), Lack of Official facilitation/support (20%), Local hostility towards refugees (11%) and Physical and digital threats (11%).

2. Coverage of Afghan Refugees - Survey of Pakistani Journalists

Please also have a (short) introductory text here which include some methodological basics. See also comments above (Page 8)

2.1 ABOUT RESPONDENTS

2.1.1 LOCATION



Respondents for this survey were drawn from all the three cities where population of Afghan refugees is concentrated i.e., Peshawar, Quetta, and Islamabad.

2.1.2 DESIGNATION

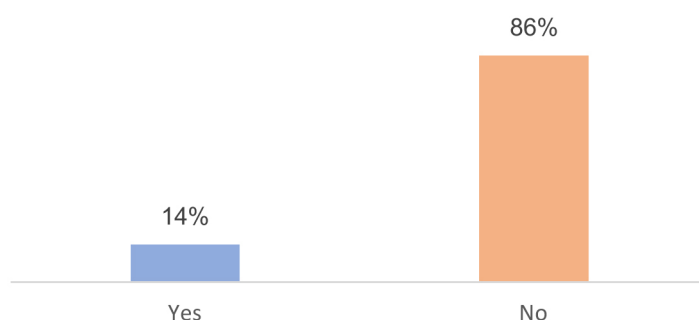


Respondents for this survey are influential journalists performing various important functions in Pakistan's regional and national media.

2.2 VIEWS ON COVERAGE OF AFGHAN REFUGEES

2.2.1 COVERAGE OF NEW AFGHAN REFUGEE COMMUNITY IN PAKISTAN

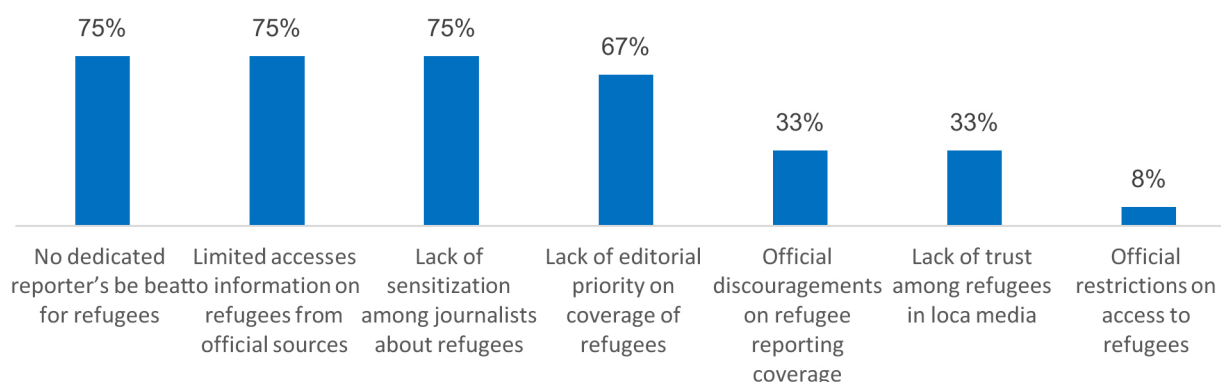
In your view, is your medium (TV, Radio, Internet, newspaper) adequately covering new Afghan refugee community in Pakistan?



A large majority of respondents (86%) think that their media is not adequately covering new Afghan refugee community.

2.2.2 REASONS FOR INADEQUATE COVERAGE

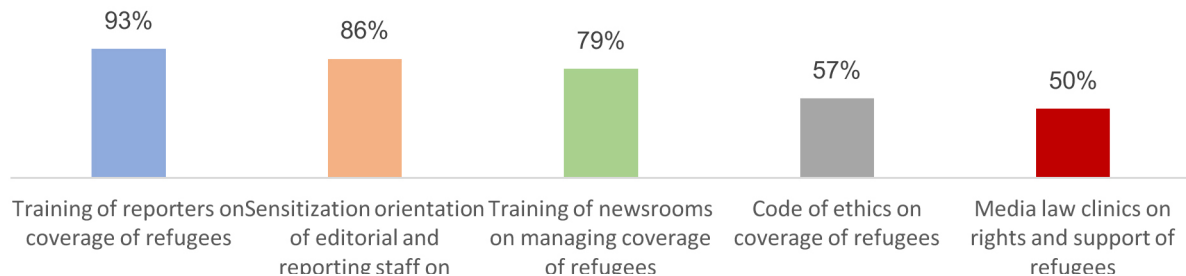
What do you think are the main reasons the media is not adequately covering Afghan refugee community in Pakistan?



When asked to identify the major reasons for media not adequately covering Afghan refugee community in Pakistan, respondents listed following: No dedicated reporter's beat for refugees (75%), limited access to information on refugees from official sources (75%), lack of sensitization among journalists about refugees (75%), lack of editorial priority on coverage of refugees (67%), official discouragement on refugee reporting coverage (33%), lack of trust among refugees in local media (33%) and official restrictions on access to refugees (8%).

2.2.3 IMPROVING CAPACITY OF MEDIA

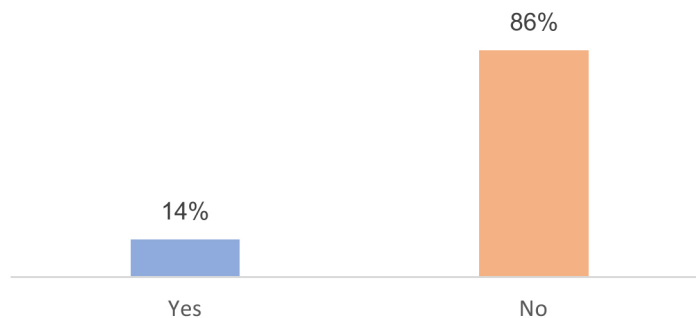
How can capacities of your medium (TV, Radio, Internet, newspaper) be improved to address special information needs of Afghan refugees?



When asked to identify how capacities of media can be improved to address special information needs of refugees, respondents prioritised the following: Training of reporters on coverage of refugees (93%), Sensitization orientation of editorial and reporting staff on refugee communities (86%), Training of newsroom on managing coverage of refugees (79%), Code of ethics on coverage of refugees (57%) and Media law clinics on rights and support of refugees (50%).

2.2.4 ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION NEEDS OF REFUGEE COMMUNITY

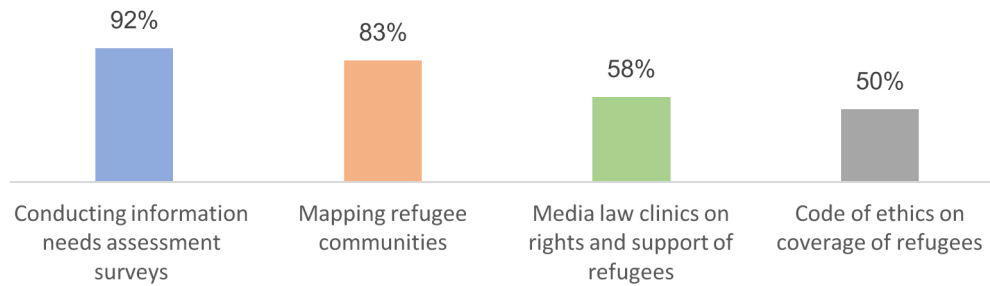
Has your medium (TV, Radio, Internet, newspaper) conducted an assessment of information needs of refugee community?



A very large majority of Pakistani journalists (86%) said their medium had not conducted any assessment of information needs of refugee communities. Only 14% said their medium had conducted such an assessment.

4.2.5 NEED FOR ASSISTANCE TO IMPROVE MEDIA CAPACITY

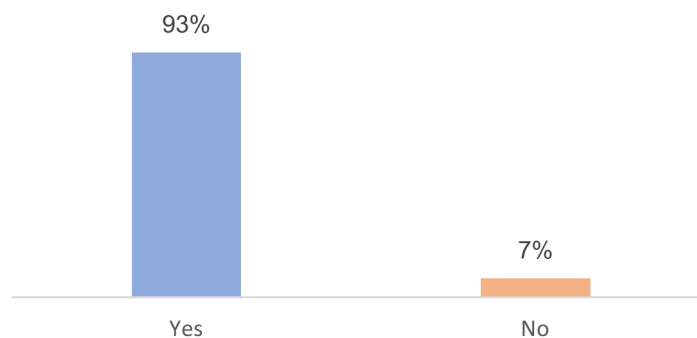
If no [to the above question], which of the following types of assistance can improve capacity of your medium to address these information needs?



To address these information needs, respondents outlined following types of assistance to improve capacity of their mediums: Conducting information need assessment survey (92%), Mapping refugee communities (83%), Media law clinics on rights and support of communities (58%) and Code of ethics on coverage of refugees (50%).

2.2.6 WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE WITH RESPONDENTS EXILED IN PAKISTAN

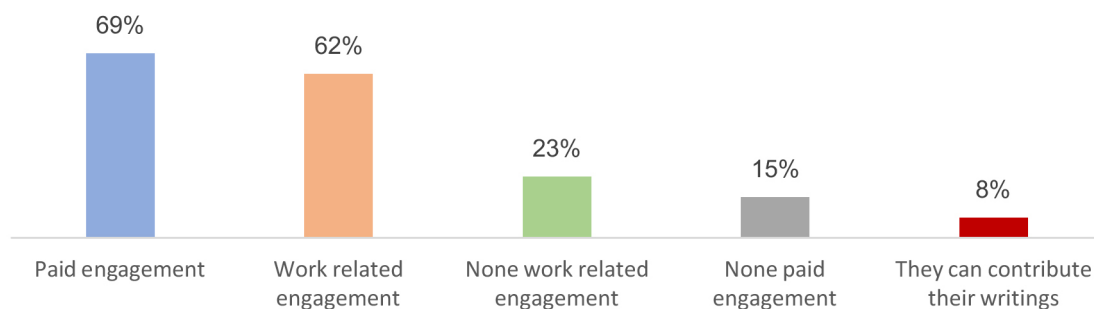
Would your medium / platform (TV, Radio, Internet, Newspaper) be willing to engage with Respondents exiled in Pakistan?



A very large majority of Pakistani journalist respondents (93%) said that their medium/platform would be willing to engage with Afghan journalists exiled in Pakistan. However, 7% thought that their medium/platform would not be inclined to such engagement.

2.2.7 POSSIBLE ENGAGEMENTS

If yes [to the above question], which of the following engagements are possible?



Respondents outlined the possibility of engagement with Respondents in the following order: paid engagements (69%), Work related engagements (62%), No work-related engagements (23%) No paid engagements (15%) and accepting contributions from Respondents (8%).

2.2.8 NEED FOR ASSISTANCE

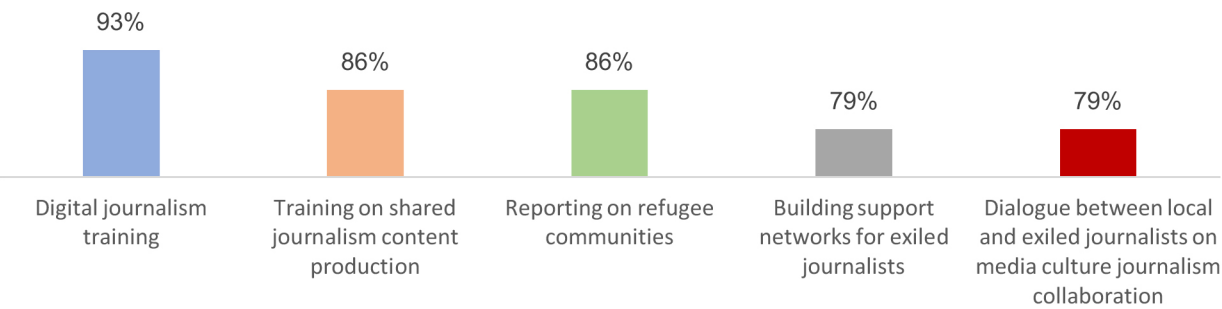
Do you need assistance to facilitate and support engagement with exiled Afghan journalists?

Yes	100%
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100% journalists said they needed assistance to facilitate and support engagement with exiled Afghan journalists.

2.2.9 TYPES OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED

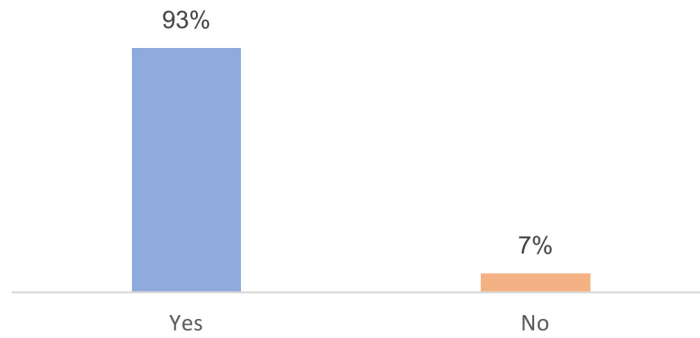
If yes, which of the following assistance do you need?



When asked about the need for assistance, journalists prioritised the following: Digital journalism training (93%), Training on shared journalism content production (86%), Reporting on refugee communities (86%), Building support network for exiled journalists (79%), Dialogue between local and exiled journalists on media culture journalism collaboration (79%).

2.2.10 WILLINGNESS TO SHOWCASE JOURNALISM CONTENT PRODUCED BY EXILED JOURNALISTS

Is your medium (TV, Radio, Internet, Newspaper) willing to showcase journalism content produced by exiled journalists?



A large majority of journalists (93%) said their medium was willing to showcase journalism content produced by exiled journalists.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

In absence of any income or external support, most Afghan journalists interviewed for this research are dependent on their own resources. At a time of economic crisis in Pakistan, respondents are forced to stay in expensive commercial accommodations that can soon put them in a desperate situation. Less than one third respondents (29%) are share rented houses or rent a portion of a house because other forms are a lot costlier and harder to access. Compared to other non-journalist refugees, the low percentage of journalists staying in rented houses also shows that they are not interested in staying in Pakistan for a longer time.

Exiled Afghan journalists included in this research have rich journalism backgrounds – about half have spent up to 10 years in this profession, making them mid-career journalists. while over a fourth have over 10 years of experience. Nearly 10% have over 15 years of experience. This mix of young and experienced journalists raises the possibility of mentorship/master trainer roles by the experienced journalists for their junior fellow professionals in potential media development initiatives.

Respondents come from a diverse media background – television, print, radio- which indicates a comparable reflection of the Pakistani media practitioners' landscape by medium association and increases the chances of compatibility with local media engagement possibilities as similar skillsets would allow for improve professional integration locally. Respondents also seem to enjoy a rich palette of experience across virtually the entire spectrum of media key roles and skillsets that can enrich potentially nuanced media development initiatives as varied backgrounds allow for potential openings associated with their expertise and experiences.

Majority of respondents (63%) think that their current skills are inadequate to allow them to continue as a journalist outside Afghanistan. This indicates a major demand in potential alternatives to media practitioners' present roles that can help diversify the skillsets of exiled journalists to help them adapt more professionally in exile conditions.

The respondents indicated a rich menu of additional skillsets that can be imparted to them to help them resume their interrupted journalism careers which shows a high demand for professional skillsets among the exiled journalists and a willingness to embrace new journalistic skillsets.

A large majority of respondents expressed the need for assistance in engagement/ association with international, Afghan and Pakistani media. The survey indicates a varied set of possibilities of engagement with various media environments provided the right environment is created for supporting engagements of exiled journalists with relevant media. It also shows that nearly one in five exiled journalist who took part in this survey are willing to work with local media.

Respondents also expressed the need to learn an additional language which indicates a high degree of interest among exiled journalists who wanted to take to at least one additional language to the ones they know for use in any potentially resumed media careers. In Pakistan language trainers for all these four languages are easy to find. Pakistani media also widely operates in at least three of these four languages. Unfortunately, there is almost no Dari language media in Pakistan.

There is a nearly universal demand among the respondents for a wide range of technical assistance and resources that can help them adjust to/familiarize with Pakistan – including their local professional counterparts – or even third countries, if they transition. Digital journalism is the foremost demand.

Afghan journalists included in the study say that they are facing most problems that a refugee population faces in a new country. However, they don't enjoy access to the legal support that can enable them to swim through this situation.

A very large majority of respondents from Pakistani media believe that media is not adequately covering Afghan refugee community in Pakistan. This indicates a large unmet need for both coverage for refugees (to help them make informed choices) and about them (for local audiences to blunt any potential hostilities toward them). This also represents the primary rationale for engagement with local media on refugee/humanitarian issues.

When asked to identify how capacities of media can be improved to address special information needs of refugees, respondents prioritised the following: training of reporters on coverage of refugees, sensitization orientation of editorial and reporting staff on refugee communities, training of newsroom on managing coverage of refugees, code of ethics on coverage of refugees and media law clinics on rights and support of refugees. This prioritization represents the nuanced – and rich – demand side of local media in the categories of technical assistance and resources required for them to improve their humanitarian reporting particularly in the context of Afghan refugees.

To address these information needs, respondents outlined the need for assistance to improve capacity of their mediums in conducting information need assessment survey, mapping refugee communities, media law clinics on rights and support of communities and Code of ethics on coverage of refugees. This indicates the preferred outline of a potential humanitarian course for content producers of local media – another huge unmet need.

All Pakistani journalists included in the survey said they needed assistance to facilitate and support engagement with exiled Afghan journalists. When asked about the need for assistance, journalists prioritised the following: digital journalism training, training on shared journalism content production, reporting on refugee communities, building support network for exiled journalists, dialogue between local and exiled journalists on media culture journalism collaboration.

This represents a customized menu of skillsets and resources that can be made available to local media partners to establish a humanitarian focus on exiled Afghans in Pakistan as well as opening more formal peer to peer engagements between Pakistani and Afghan media practitioners.

A large majority of respondents among Pakistani journalists (93%) said their medium was willing to showcase journalism content produced by exiled journalists. Though respondents can't make editorial decisions, it indicates an overwhelming desire among local media to engage with exiled Afghan journalists and help them find public platforms and give voices to their humanitarian needs. This also opens up opportunities for potential content partnerships with digital journalism websites (e.g., Tribal News Network) and radio stations (e.g., FM Power99) interested in producing content especially for Afghan refugee populations, especially by engaging exiled Afghan journalists.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Media development and journalists' assistance recommendations

In view of the key findings of this compendium of research and informational and journalistic needs articulated by the exiled journalists as well as local media, add addressing the key patterns outlined above, the following recommendations are offered by Freedom Network:

- 1. Psychosocial support for exiled journalists and their families:** The Respondents should be offered a guidance and advisory service to assist with the management of their financial, shelter, health, transition and integration/inclusion problems.
- 2. Professional support for exiled journalists:** The exiled journalists need to be offered a range of technical assistance – such as orientation workshops, skilset enhancement trainings and local journalism guidelines, to enable them to partially or fully resume their journalism careers through small grants-supported content production initiatives. This can include establishment of a newsroom of sorts that manage a news assignment cycle and provide editorial services to make their content publish-worthy.
- 3. Support for engagement of exiled journalists with local and international media:** This initiative can promote engagement between exiled journalists and local and international media to support a working relationship around content contribution, engagement between exiled journalists and local press clubs to promote inclusion and camaraderie. A digitally secure network of Respondents exiled in Pakistan should be established to promote coordination and liaison with each other to support professional source and resource sharing.
- 4. Build capacity of local media on humanitarian journalism:** Arrange orientations and trainings for relevant local media to focus on Afghan refugee communities and offer grants for digital and radio content for targeted media addressing the information needs of refugees as well as coverage aimed at local authorities.
- 5. Strengthen engagement between Afghan and Pakistan media development actors:** Support potential partnerships between Pakistan-based media development actors with counterpart Afghan networks to leverage each other's experiences and professional resources to jointly support exiled Respondents in Pakistan.

Annex: Methodology

Backdrop

This study was designed as twin research initiatives, first focusing on determining the principal challenges facing newly arriving refugees from Afghanistan after 15 August 2021 and their information needs and the second report focusing on identifying the challenges of Afghan journalists-turned-refugees and mapping their professional needs and options or rehabilitating them. The following are the outlines for these two separate initiatives:

Research #1: The state of newly arrived Afghan refugees in Pakistan

Thematic research focus – principal questions

The following principal questions were examined as the main thematic focus of this research:

1. **Quantum:** How many newly arrived Afghan refugees are there in the early stages?
2. **Route:** Through which routes and means they are arriving?
3. **Settlements:** Where are the arriving refugees settling?
4. **Shelter:** What form of housing is available to the refugees?
5. **Primary challenges:** What are the main difficulties/issues/risks arriving refugees are facing?
6. **Restrictions:** What main restrictions, including legal, are refugees faced with?
7. **Information:** What primary information needs are the arriving refugees facing?
8. **Native language:** Which languages do the refugees communicate in: Pashtu, Dari or both?
9. **Origin:** From which area of Afghanistan they are migrating?
10. **Duration:** For how long they intend to stay in the host country?
11. **Media:** Which mediums or platforms do the refugees use to get relevant information?
12. **Access:** Which devices or means of information access are the refugees using?
13. **Narratives:** What are host state sensitivities on information narratives vis-s-vis refugees?
14. **Coverage:** How is Pakistani media covering the refugee arrival situation?
15. **Host info:** What are the principal information needs of host communities related to refugees?
16. **Comparison:** What are the similarities and differences in the info needs of hosts and refugees?

Research target groups

The following primary stakeholders served as the target groups of this research:

- Newly arrived refugees
- Host communities – in regions where the refugees are living
- Relevant government authorities – e.g., Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees (CAR), Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and Federal Interior Ministry

- Relevant civil society organizations dealing with refugee issues
- Relevant UN agencies – e.g., UNHCR
- Local Media (For constructive coverage of the refugees in general)

Research #2: The state of Respondents exiled in Pakistan

Thematic research focus – principal questions

The following principal questions were examined as the main thematic focus of this research:

1. **Quantum:** How many Respondents are there in Pakistan?
2. **Origin** From which areas of Afghanistan the journalists have fled?
3. **Destination:** In which regions are they arriving in and aiming to base themselves in Pakistan?
4. **Primary challenges:** What are the main difficulties/issues/risks arriving journalists are facing?
5. **Restrictions:** What main restrictions, including legal, are the exiled journalists faced with?
6. **Professional options:** What options exist for the exiled journalists to continue their journalism careers in Pakistan – working for Pakistan-based, Afghanistan-based or international media?
7. **Language:** In which language and medium they were doing journalism?
8. **Native language:** What is the native tongue and which other languages they speak?
9. **Professional needs:** What technical support or resources do the exiled journalists need to continue their journalism work while in exile in Pakistan?
10. **Journalism challenges:** What possible challenges – including sensitivities and perceptions about Afghanistan of host communities – the exiled journalists may face?
11. **Legal media restrictions:** What difficulties do the exiled journalists foresee in terms of media related and legal aspects of freedom of expression and access to information if they operate as journalists within Pakistan?
12. **Information sensitivities:** What is the government stance – declared and undeclared – regarding the prospects of exiled Afghan journalists operating from Pakistan?

Research target groups

The following primary stakeholders served as the target groups of this research:

- Exiled Afghan journalists in Pakistan
- Local media houses – radio, television, newspapers, digital, press clubs in Peshawar, Islamabad & Quetta
- Government officials – Federal Ministry of SAFRON and Federal Ministry of Interior in Islamabad
- Chief Afghan Commissioner in Islamabad
- Chiefs of Afghan Commissionerate in Peshawar and Quetta
- UN Refugee agency - UNHCR
- International non-governmental organization

- Pakistani civil society organizations
- Host communities in Peshawar, Quetta and Islamabad

Sampling Framework

Since it was not possible to draw a random sample of Afghan journalists, the research team decided to rely on a sample of convenience. Respondents for this survey were selected because they were found to be “convenient” sources of data. An effort was made to make this sample as representative of exiled Afghan journalists as possible.

For this research, 35 exiled Afghan journalists were interviewed in three cities i.e., Islamabad (20), Peshawar (14) and Quetta (1) through a structured questionnaire. 14 media persons from national media houses – radio, television, newspapers, digital, press clubs- were also interviewed for the research. This sample was also drawn from Islamabad (4), Peshawar (5) and Quetta (5).

Findings in this report are not statistically representative of all Afghan journalists in Pakistan. However, they fill an important information gap and by indicate trends and providing a snapshot of the issues faced by them.

Challenges

Since respondents feel insecure due to their differences with the Taliban government and also due to their precarious legal status in Pakistan, they were reluctant to be interviewed. It demanded a lot of assurance and convincing from the research team to bring them on board and involvement of Afghan intermediary helped build trust among the respondents and Freedom Network’s research team members.

The Federal Ministry of SAFRON and Federal Ministry of Interior did not respond to our request for interview.

About Freedom Network

Freedom Network (FN) is an award-winning Pakistan-based independent media and civil liberties organization registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). It was awarded the French Human Rights Award in 2017 by the Government of France for standing out in defending freedom of expression and human rights agendas in Pakistan.

Vision

To defend and promote civil liberties by championing and assisting an informed society that sees media as a key partner in an open, democratic, pluralist and inclusive Pakistan.

Mandate

To DEFEND and promote *freedom of expression*; STRENGTHEN safety of journalists, information practitioners and rights activists; FACILITATE *media professionalisms* including independent digital *public interest journalism*; and SUPPORT *gender mainstreaming and pluralism in media*.

About DW Akademie

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle's center for international media development, journalism training and knowledge transfer. Our projects strengthen the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information. DW Akademie empowers people worldwide to make independent decisions based on reliable facts and constructive dialogue.

DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in approximately 60 developing countries and emerging economies.