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Unprecedented Assault on Free Speech

Who are behind the recent terror attacks in Afghanistan?

Criminal attacks are planned and coordinated.

The terror attacks have heightened in the Capital Kabul and in other cities in Afghanistan. It is carried out by political extremists as well as foreign and domestic terrorists. It was unlike anything we have witnessed since the so-called peace talk started in Doha, Qatar. According to political analysts, reporters, eyewitnesses, and social media the killings and assassinations of high-profile figures, government critics and experts unprecedentedly have been carried out systematically by different internal and external groups. Not only extremist Islamic groups such as **Hezbe Islami** Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Rasul Sayyaf's **Etihad-al- Islami** (Islamic Union), some members of **Jamiat-e Islami** (Islamic Society) are involved in terrorist attacks, but above all the government of Afghanistan is also responsible for several organised and predetermined killings recently and in the past. Likewise, foreign countries especially the United States, Pakistan, and Iran are involved in assassinating nationalist and secular forces, according to well-informed political analysts.

National security arrested the Chinese on the orders of India and the United States:

The recent news on the arrest of ten Chinese intelligence agents by the Afghan national security sounds farcical but a questionable issue to many people. Chinese spies are said to have collaborated with the Haqqani terror network. Why did the Chinese do this 20 years later? The secret

war between China and India is gradually unfolded and reaching the media. China's cooperation with the Haqqani Network is hilarious and echoes a kind of spitting in the face of news agency. The largest service to the Haqqani Network to date has been provided by the Government of Afghanistan and the United States; For example, the release of thousands of slayers and thugs from prisons, including Anas Haqqani, which stands as vivid examples. The United States has also officially served the Haqqani Network as the backbone of the Taliban by signing a deal with the Taliban at the behest of its President and the advice of Khalilzad, the UN envoy for Peace talk in Doha. Now, it is not a taboo for the Chinese to associate with the Haqqani group; Neither important nor can it whitewash the Kabul government and the US administration. National security is so involved with the Taliban and ISIS that it has had no interest in the Chinese during this period. As India's relationship with China and China's relationship with the United States deteriorates, they have now opened a new propaganda front from Afghanistan side to pierce each other's small wounds. It is possible that the Chinese used Haqqani mercenaries to capture Chinese Turkestan fugitives. Otherwise, the biggest supporter of the Haqqani Network has been the government of Pakistan, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the Taliban itself. The Taliban is supported by the government of Afghanistan. They are also supported by the governments of other countries in the region based on reliable information leaked through media outlets and freelance observers.

Motivation of radical Islamic groups to assassinate media activists and women in Afghanistan:

Referring to the recent assassinations of Afghan journalists, civil society activists and women, a subcontinent expert said: "The main purpose of these assassinations is to intimidate journalists and women activists in the country so that they give up and leave the country. In an interview with ISNA, Pir Mohammad Mollazehi said about the recent assassinations in Afghanistan, including the assassinations of media activists and women in the neighbouring country: "It is still not clear exactly who committed these assassinations and the finger of blame by the Afghan government is towards the Taliban. While some of the Taliban have denied the assassinations, but they are still being implicated," he said. "If we consider the radical Islamic movements in Afghanistan, which include the Taliban, ISIS, al-Qaeda and other armed groups." There is enough motivation to create terror among Afghan media activists, civil society activists and women, because it thinks that activists in this field have caused them to lose the initiative." Referring to the multiplicity of media in Afghanistan

and their influence on public opinion, Mullazai said: "What is presented by journalists in many of these media is not in line with the ideological views of these radical groups, so these radical groups are threatened and intimidated." And they want to carry out an assassination attempt to prevent the media freedom that has been established in Afghanistan since 2001, and to take the initiative out of the hands of media activists.

Referring to the Taliban's view of the media, the expert added: "When they oversaw affairs in Afghanistan, they shut down the entire media and there was only one Sharia radio station in Afghanistan, which broadcast only the Qur'an recitation and religious propaganda. The media now harass these extremist groups, who think that the media has taken the initiative from them. Even if they take power, they will only own the mosques, and certainly the audience of these TV channels is more than those who attend the mosques. Thus, the media and journalists have become rivals of radical Islamic groups in Afghanistan, and this gives them a strong incentive to intimidate and threaten media activists and women. He continued: "Currently, this atmosphere and these assassinations have caused terror among Afghan media activists, including women, and radical Islamic groups are seeking to create such an atmosphere for these journalists to feel that their lives are at risk so that they are forced to giving up their activity. "On the other hand, the freedom created in a part of the Afghan society is not digestible, because a large part of the society is traditional, and it is unlikely that some people and well-known extremist Jihadi groups who oppose this process will carry out these assassinations.

Government involved in killings, attack on Light Movement and Resurrection movement for change stand as evidence:

Senate Deputy Speaker Mohammad Alam Izidyar says that three years after the killing of members of the Resurrection Movement in Kabul, investigations show that the government has no political will to prosecute the perpetrators of the movement's killing.

Speaking on the third anniversary of the assassination of Mohammad Salem Izidyar and a number of other members of the Resurrection Movement for Change in Kabul, Mr. Izidyar said that the government has always deceived, lied, wasted time and has politically supported the killers."

He also said that the government is putting pressure on the Investigative Board and the Attorney General's office to divert the investigation. According to him, in the past three years, the investigation has been stopped several times under various pretexts. The Ministry of

Interior and the General Directorate of National Security have not cooperated with the team of investigation. He stressed that the Ministry of Interior and the Directorate of National Security not only did not provide the documents to the commission of inquiry, but also tried to provide grounds for the acquittal of "criminals and murderers." One day after Zanzaq Incident, suicide attacks took place at the funeral of Mohammad Salem Izidiyar, six people were killed and nearly 90 others were injured in the incident.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Alam Izidiyar calls on the court to administer justice as soon as possible in connection with the case, given sufficient reasons, documents and evidence. He goes on to say that they will not give in to any flexibility, bargaining, bribery and conciliation, except for a fair and legal trial of the "perpetrators of youth murder." The secret groups inside the government involved in the attack on targeted killings, he added.

The founder of the "Memorial to the Victims of Drones" organization, in a note in Foreign Policy dated February 6, 2017, revealed the CIA's plan to train the Afghan security service to eliminate the opposition. The story began with the failed assassination of two critics of the Kabul government, Nizar Mohammad Mumahin and Mohammad Hussein Haqyar, who oppose the US military occupation of Afghanistan. The memo continues that sometime later, Wahid Mozhdeh, another critic of Afghanistan and the United States, was shot and killed on November 20, 2009. While terrorist operations were commonly attributed to the Taliban, but the Taliban acquitted Mizhda in a statement calling it an intelligence operation. Nizar Mumahin and Hussein Haqyar, while leaving Afghanistan, attributed the assassination to the Kabul security service. The author recalls that in September 2009, Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, director of the National Security Agency or Afghanistan's intelligence service, was forced to resign after a family was massacred in Jalalabad by Unit 02 of the organization. The government initially claimed that these individuals were members of ISIS but revealed that they had no links to terrorist groups.

Reporters and high profile figure the new target of terrorists in Afghanistan:

The targeted assassinations of journalists, and women's rights activists in Afghanistan have increased so much in the last two months that they have caused serious concern in the country and have drawn sharp criticism from civil society, human rights organizations, and politicians.

According to IRNA, in the past two months, journalists in different parts of Afghanistan have been killed in targeted explosions by unidentified gunmen. The head of an electoral body and a women's rights activist were also killed in the attack. In this series of attacks, journalists from various media outlets, including Radio Azadi, TV One Afghanistan, Yama Siyawash a former Tolo News presenter, and their colleagues were targeted and killed. A female journalist in Nangarhar province was also attacked and killed while on her way to work. Ariana News TV host was among the media activists who were mysteriously killed in Kabul a few weeks ago. Yusuf Rashid, head of Afghanistan Free and Fair Elections, was assassinated in Kabul. RFE / RL correspondent Elias Dai was killed in southern Afghanistan.

The latest targeted attack last Thursday in Kapisa province targeted "**Fereshteh Kohistani**", a women's rights activist, which provoked a lot of reactions and criticism. Subsequently, several other political activists and journalists spoke out against the threats made against them. In a text posted on her Facebook page a week before her assassination, Fereshteh Kohistani complained to the Interior Ministry and the Afghan security services to help counter the threats against her, but the authority utterly ignored her. **The issue sparked criticism of the Afghan government and security agencies after it was reported in the Afghan media, with analysts accusing the authorities of neglecting to ensure the safety of journalists and civil society activists.**

Commander Sattar Ghorbandi was recently killed along with four others in an operation by national security forces in the 11th district of Kabul. The government then appointed a delegation to investigate the matter. But as in the past the investigations have not any outcome just is conducted to sweep under the carpet the issue for sometimes until another similar incident occur.

After the incident, Zaki Daryabi, the head of Afghanistan's Daily Information newspaper, wrote on his Facebook that he had raised the issue of security threats to journalists to the interior minister. He said that the media should buy weapons themselves and provide security for themselves and their employees. And if they cannot afford to buy weapons, they should stop working and go home.

Ahmad Saeedi, a political scientist, and university professor, also reported security threats against him in the past few days, saying that these threats had affected his mental state. He said: "Although some security people have suggested to him to stop interviewing, criticizing and political activity and

change his house or live in a secret place or leave the country for a while; But he has not accepted any of these offers.

On the other hand, a Tolo News reporter wrote on his Facebook page that he has been facing the most serious threats during his years of working in the media these days, which has caused him concern. **The question now is who is behind the assassinations that have destroyed the mental and physical security of Afghanistan's media, political and civil activists.** Prior to these incidents, the perpetrators for each incident accepted the responsibility after each assassination, but now these incidents are carried out silently and anonymously.

Some government officials, including Amrullah Saleh, Afghanistan's first vice president, have blamed the Taliban for the killings. He called the terrorists linked to the Taliban and ISIS, "ISIL Taliban." At a meeting of Afghanistan's Supreme National Reconciliation Council, Mr Saleh claimed that the Peshawar Taliban Council had decided to increase assassinations in cities to reduce public support for the government and to incite hatred and pessimism against the government. He added that the Taliban negotiating team had also told the group's troops that they could help advance the peace talks by escalating the war and violence, so the Taliban were behind all these incidents. But evidence suggests that alongside the Taliban, Westerners, and especially the United States, are responsible. Because of the presence of the United States and its Western allies, who have always claimed to have invaded Afghanistan for security and peace, the two terrorist groups have now reached 20 terrorist groups in the country, and recent assassinations have claimed the lives of those seeking information only.

The Afghan Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) said in a statement that targeted attacks on civil society activists and media workers had challenged the peace process. "The repetition of targeted attacks is worrying and, while increasing mistrust in the peace process, it has also seriously challenged confidence in the effectiveness of government institutions," it said. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has named Afghanistan as one of the most dangerous areas for journalists in the world. Also, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNHCR) has called Afghanistan the most dangerous place for journalists in the world.

The situation continues volatile as the second round of Afghan peace talks with the Taliban was scheduled to begin in January 2021 in Doha. According to Mullah Baradar, head of the Taliban's political bureau, in the meeting the Taliban will not back down from their position. If both the Taliban and the government insist on maintaining their positions, the current stalemate will

continue, and peace will not be achieved. Or if the Afghan government withdraws unilaterally, they will eventually have to accept the Islamic Emirate, which also makes the future of aspiration for peace impossible.