

Afghan Taliban vow to implement media ban on images of living things

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Kabul (AFP) – Afghanistan's Taliban morality ministry pledged Monday to implement a law banning news media from publishing images of all living things, with journalists told the rule will be gradually enforced.

"The law applies to all Afghanistan... and it will be implemented gradually," the spokesman for the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (PVPV) Saiful Islam Khyber told AFP, adding that officials would work to persuade people that images of living things are against Islamic law. . . convincing people these things are really contrary to sharia (law) and must be avoided."

Aspects of the new law have not yet been strictly enforced, including advise to the general public not to take or look at images of living things on phones and other devices.

Taliban officials continue to regularly post photos of people on social media and Afghan journalists have told AFP they received assurances from authorities after the law was announced that they would be able to continue their work.

Before the recent law was announced, Taliban officials in Kandahar were banned from taking photos and videos of living things but the rule did not include news media. Now it applies to everyone," Khyber said

In central Ghazni province on Sunday, PVPV officials summoned local journalists and told them the morality police would start gradually implementing the law. They advised visual

journalists to take photos from further away and film fewer events “to get in the habit”, a journalist who did not want to give his name for fear of reprisal told AFP.

Since 2021, however, officials have sporadically forced business owners to follow some censorship rules, such as crossing out the faces of men and women on adverts, covering the heads of shop mannequins with plastic bags, and blurring the eyes of fish pictured on restaurant menus.



Images of living things, including a fish at a restaurant in Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, are often censored in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover © Wakil KOHSAR / AFP

That fish looks very dead to me, and therefore not a ‘living thing’. And what is the status of the vegetables? Infidel! Don’t talk about the noble officers of the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice like that.

. . .560 women, who have borne the brunt of restrictions the United Nations have called “gender apartheid”, including being ordered to wear masks on television. In Helmand, women’s voices have been banned from television and radio.