



PRESS RELEASE

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SARDAR AHMAD, AFP JOURNALIST, KILLED IN ATTACK IN KABUL

SARDAR AHMAD, A JOURNALIST AT AFP'S KABUL BUREAU, WAS KILLED THURSDAY ALONG WITH HIS WIFE AND TWO OF THEIR CHILDREN IN AN ATTACK ON THE CITY'S SERENA HOTEL. HIS YOUNGEST SON WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED IN THE ATTACK.

“This is an immensely painful and enormous loss for Agence France-Presse,” said AFP chairman Emmanuel Hoog. “Sardar Ahmad was a dedicated and courageous journalist, a cornerstone of our team in Afghanistan who delivered, every day, exceptional coverage of the news in extremely difficult conditions.”

The attack by Taliban gunmen on a restaurant in the hotel left at least nine dead. It came two weeks before the presidential election and marked a fresh deterioration in the security situation in the Afghan capital. The body of Sardar, his wife and two children were identified at the hospital by an AFP photographer.

“It is by relying on journalists like Sardar that the international media is able to cover the Afghan tragedy,” said AFP’s global news director Philippe Massonnet. “The entire agency and its worldwide network are in mourning today.”

Aged 40, Sardar Ahmad was hired by AFP in 2003 to cover the daily briefings by the US-led coalition at Bagram airbase, and became a permanent correspondent covering all aspects of Afghan life.

He was a specialist in security issues with strong contacts on both the government and Taliban sides, which gave him a deep understanding of the complex conflict which was wracking his country.

But he wrote about all aspects of Afghan society— his last feature, filed on Tuesday, was about a lion that was rescued from a rooftop in Kabul.

AFP has maintained a strong presence in Kabul during the decades of conflict that have plagued Afghanistan.

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