



Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF)
2016 Report on Impunity for Crimes
Against Journalists in Pakistan
Justice delayed AND justice denied





2016 Report on Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists in Pakistan

Justice delayed AND justice denied

Pakistan is among countries that do not properly investigate and prosecute crimes against media professionals. Because of the near absolute level of impunity, most of the people who attack, injure or even murder media journalists in Pakistan remain free.

Journalists are murdered, killed, detained, abducted, harassed and threatened by law enforcement and intelligence agencies, militants, tribal elders and feudal lords, as well as political and religious parties that claim to promote democracy and the rule of law. Media houses and media persons are not only being targeted but threatened, pressurized, intimidated and harassed by the state and non-state elements.

The federal and provincial governments in Pakistan have not done anything beyond paying lip service to promote safety of media professionals and institutions. The draft of the much publicized media safety bill by the federal government is not only woefully inadequate but seems to be stuck because of procedural and bureaucratic hurdles.

The lack of interest by the federal and provincial governments as well as employers in pursuing legal cases of violence against journalists is the main reason to the unacceptably high level of impunity.

According to ongoing research by Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), 72 media personnel have lost their lives since 2002 while perusing their professions. Of these, 47 media personnel were targeted and murdered and 25 killed while pursuing their duties. In addition, 185 media personnel were injured, 88 were assaulted, 22 were abducted and 42 were detained during this same period. In 2016, two cameramen were killed while covering the protest by lawyers in a suicide bombing while covering the protest of lawyers at Civil Hospital in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province.

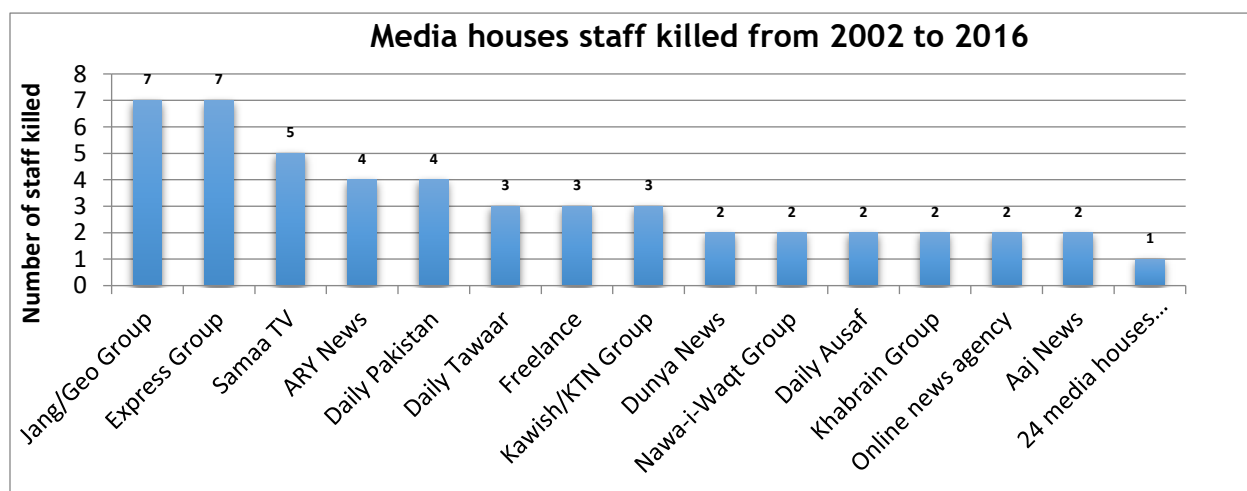




In addition, sixteen media practitioners were injured while covering events for their media organizations, and one media executive was abducted in Peshawar. The report also expressed concern that that murder of journalist Shan Dahar has not been re-investigated despite the passage of over six months since the Inspector General of Sindh Police ordered the reopening of the case. (Please see details below)

Region	Violence against media from 2002 to 2016					
	Murdered	Killed	Injured	Assault	Abducted	Detained
Balochistan	13	8	12	1	7	16
Sindh	14	2	66	40	3	6
Punjab	2	1	38	14	1	10
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	10	11	18	5	4	4
FATA	7	2	8	0	4	6
Islamabad	1	1	43	28	3	0
Total	47	25	185	88	22	42

Of the 72 cases of killing of media practitioners since 2002, there have been convictions in only five cases. The reason is that in most cases neither the government nor the employers follow up cases of killed nor injured media workers and the cases languish in courts for some time before they are closed for non-prosecution. (Please see details below)





Most of media personnel in Pakistan belong to middle class and do not have the financial or social power to stand up against powerful people who killed or injured their loved ones. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that In Pakistan almost all cases in courts, including murder, can be withdrawn if the assailants or family members reach a compromise after payment of blood money. PPF has so far documented four cases where court proceedings were withdrawn because of agreements between the accused and families of the victims. (Please see details below).

Threats and violence have forced many journalists to move from these danger zones and to leave the profession or to resort to self-censorship, particularly in conflict areas. As a result news reports from conflict areas are based on press releases, not on observations by independent journalists. Thus, new reports that are published or broadcast lack credibility and do not inform the public in an objective manner.

Number of media personnel killed since 2002			
Name of media group	Number of media personnel killed	Name of media group	Number of media personnel killed
Aaj News	2	Daily Pakistan	4
AbbTakk TV	1	Daily Shumal	1
ARY News	4	Daily Sindhu	1
Asia Times Online	1	Daily Tawaar	3
City-42 TV	1	Daily Ummat	1
Daily AajKal	1	Dawn Media Group	1
Daily Akhbar-e-Khyber	1	Dharti TV	1
Daily Ausaf	2	Dunya News	2
Daily Awami Inqilab	1	Express Group	7
Daily Azadi	1	Freelance	3
Daily Balochistan Times	1	Frontier Post	1
Daily Intikhab	1	Jang Group of Companies	7
Daily Markaz	1	Karak Times	1
Daily Mashriq	1	Kawish and KTN Group	3
Khyber TV	1	Khabrain Group	2
Nawa-i-Waqt Group	2	Royal TV	1
NNI News Agency	1	Samaa TV	5
Online news agency	2	Shamshad TV	1
The Wall Street Journal	1	VASH TV	1
Total			72





Convictions for Murder of Journalists

Following are the five cases of those who murdered journalists were convicted by the courts.

Ayub Khan Khattak, reporter of daily *Karak Times* was murdered outside his house on 11 October, 2013 for publishing news against the drug mafia in Karak district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On March 16, 2016, the accused Aminullah and KhoobNiaz were sentenced for life imprisonment with 0.5 million Pakistan Rupees (US \$ 4,761) fine by District and Sessions Court Karak.

Wali Khan Babar, reporter of Global Entertainment Organization (*Geo*) News television channel was gunned down on 11 January, 2011 in Karachi. Two accused were sentenced to death and four were sentenced for life on March 1, 2014. The convicts have filed appeals to the Sindh High Court challenging the verdict.

Abdul Razzak Jaura, reporter of *Royal TV* was murdered on November 3, 2008, by six armed men for his reporting on drug-related crimes, in Mianwali city of Punjab province. In 2009 the Session Judge Mianwali sentenced death penalty to Munir Hussain; while declared Riaz Ahmed not involved in the crime.

The family of slain journalist challenged the verdict of lower court in Lahore High Court. On October 7, 2013, the court sentenced life imprisonment to Hussain and acquitted Ahmed.

Shan Dahar's family fighting for justice

According to International Freedom of Expression

Exchange (IFEX) in 2014, Shan Dahar began researching a story about local hospitals illegally selling medications



donated by NGOs. On New Year's Day in 2014, two assailants shot Dahar in the back. He died in Chandka Medical College Hospital where he was left unattended for nine hours. During this time, Shan identified his killers over the telephone with family members.

At the time of the incident, the local police declared Dahar's death an accident, despite strong evidence that he had been intentionally targeted and that the initial investigation had been compromised by political influence.

As the result of successful lobbying from Dahar family, Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), Larkana Press Club and PPF, the Inspector General of Police ordered a reinvestigation in April 2016.

However, six months later, there has been little progress. The location of the main suspects is unknown and Dahar's family reports that all efforts to initiate reinvestigation have ceased.





Nisar Ahmed Solangi, reporter of *Khabroon* was murdered for writing articles about Junejo clan on 17 June, 2007 in Pir Jo Goth, Sindh. The family had taken 0.3 million Rupees (US \$ 2,857) as compensation amount in the *Jirga* but Session Court Khairpur Mirs' rejected decision of *Jirga* and in 2012 awarded 25 years of imprisonment to Haji Bakht Junejo and Nazir Junejo; while two other accused were declared innocent.

Danial Pearl, correspondent of *The Wall Street Journal* murdered in Karachi on 21 February, 2002. The main accused Omar Saeed Sheikh was sentenced to death by court in July, 2002 and three co-accused Fahad Naseem, Syed Salman and Muhammad Adil sentenced to life imprisonment and fined half a million rupees each. In July 2002, all the convicts filed an appeal to the Sindh High Court against their convictions by ATC but their appeal yet to be heard.

Cases withdrawn after settlement between families or by local elders

In Pakistan, laws relating to *Qisas* (equal punishment as victim suffered) and *Diyat* (compensation) allows victims or victim's families to forgive the accused or convicted upon receiving blood money. The legal protection give to agreements between families of killed journalists is an important factor in promoting impunity as victims' families are financial pressure to accept blood money from those who murdered.

Another mechanism of impunity for crimes against journalists are settlements reached by the local elders known as the *Jirga* to settle disputes including murder. Supreme Court and High Court of Sindh had declared *Jirgas* illegal but the practice continue in Pakistan. Journalists and other media personnel are attacked and even murdered not because of personal animosity but because of those in positions of power and influence want to prevent information damaging to their interest from reaching the wider audiences through the media. Thus, cases of violence against media are crimes against the state and thus should not be allowed to be settled by families or by local elders.





Following are the four cases of murder settled by the heirs of the victims.

Mujeeb ur Rehman Siddiqui, senior reporter of daily *Pakistan* was killed on 17 September, 2010 allegedly by Raheem Zada, Muhammad Tauqeer and Amjad in Dargai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. All three accused are absconding and police have not been able to present them in court. The killers were facilitated by neighbors of slain journalists who provided them place for stay. In a local *Jirga*, the victim's family pardoned those who assisted the killers.

Sajid Tanoli, reporter of daily *Shumal* was killed on 29 January, 2004 allegedly by Khalid Javed, a lawyer and *Nazim* (Mayor) for writing an article on 26th January which said that Javed was running illegal liquor business, in Mansehra city in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In 2006, Tanoli's family pardoned the accused. According to Ali Asghar Tanoli, the brother of slain journalists, Javed paid 2.5 million Rupees (US \$ 23,800) the family as compensation for the death.

Ameer Bux Brohi, reporter of daily *Kawish* was shot on October, 2003 by allegedly by Shahnawaz Brohi in the town of Shikarpur in Sindh province. His case was under trial in Anti-Terrorism Court Jacobabad when family pardoned the accused Shahnawaz Brohi, Zulfiqar, Waheed and Ghulam Nabi in 2015.

Shahid Soomro, reporter of daily *Kawish* was allegedly killed by Waheed Ali in revenge for his reporting during the concluded election campaign in Kandhkot, Sindh. According to his brother Aziz Soomro, they had patched up with the accused Waheed Ali who gave to his family 1.6 million Rupees (US \$ 15,240) as fine to forgive.



Attacks on media in 2016

Since January 2016 two cameramen were killed in the line of duty, 16 media personnel were injured and one was abducted.

Media attacks 2016					
Name of victim	Organization	Date of incident	Nature of incident	City/District of incident	Province of incident
Mujeeb Tareen	Aaj News	October 7	Injured	Pishin	Balochistan
Abid Abdullah	Jang	September 28	Abducted	Peshawar	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Muhammad Safeer	Samaa News	August 22	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Rehan Ahmed	NEO News	August 22	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Usman Shareef	Channel 24	August 22	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Shahzad Khan	Aaj News	August 8	Killed	Quetta	Balochistan
Mehmood Khan	Dawn News	August 8	Killed	Quetta	Balochistan
Qasim Khan	92 news	March 4	Injured	Hyderabad	Sindh
Niaz Vighio	Daily Mehran	March 4	Injured	Hyderabad	Sindh
Fahim Babbar	Sindh TV	March 4	Injured	Hyderabad	Sindh
Farhan Khan	APP	March 4	Injured	Hyderabad	Sindh
Rafiq Hassan	Express News	February 2	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Shafi Dilshad	Dawn News	February 2	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Amjad Iqbal	Waqt News	February 2	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Hanif Umair	ARY News	February 2	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Rizwan Tabassum	AFP	February 2	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Naveed Kamal	Dunya News	February 2	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Samar Abbas	Channel 92	February 2	Injured	Karachi	Sindh
Umar Hayat	ARY News	January 13	Injured	Islamabad	Federal Capital

Two Cameramen Killed in Suicide Bombing while Covering Protest

On August 8, cameramen Shahzad Khan of Aaj News television channel and Mehmood Khan of Dawn News television channel lost their lives in a suicide bombing while covering the protest of lawyers at Civil Hospital in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province. Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA) the splinter group of the banned Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for the attack. Police a registered case against unknown persons but no arrests have yet been made.



Funeral prayer of cameraman who was killed in suicidal attack on Civil Hospital in Quetta on August 8.

Media Executive of Largest Media Group Abducted.

On 29th September, 2016 Abid Abdullah, Director Coordination of Jang group, Pakistan's largest media group, was abducted by unknown men from the posh area of Hayatabad in Peshawar, the capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. His captors kept him for hours before releasing him. They also threatened to kidnap three other prominent journalists namely Shahzaib Khanzada, Hamid Mir and Najam Sethi of the same media group. Police registered criminal complaints against unknown men but no arrests have been made.

In an apparent exercise in self-censorship, Abdullah's his own media group did not report the identity of captors or the motive behind abduction even after his release.

Journalist attacked for news story on sale of smuggled vehicles

In another case, Mujeeb Tareen reporter of Aaj News television channel was attacked with knives and metal clip by three armed men on October 6 for a news story about police raid on a cars showroom that had allegedly been selling smuggled vehicles in the town of Pishin in Balochistan. One attacker Abdullah was caught by Tareen and neighbors and handed him over to the police. The two other attackers remain at large and police have not been able to apprehend them.

Three Cameramen Injured in Attack on ARY Television Channel

ARY and NEO News television channels were attacked on 22 August by workers of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a political party in Karachi, the capital city of Sindh province. Three cameramen, namely Muhammad Safeer of Samaa News, Rehan Ahmed of NEO News and Usman Shareef of 24 channels were also injured in the protest. The protesters also damaged equipment including computer and window panes of ARY offices. One person was also killed in the protest.



Clash between political party workers and police during attack on ARY office in Karachi on Monday, August 22, 2016

Police arrested 14 MQM activists including three women. The accused were charged under sections of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) sections including murder, arson, murder attempt and other charges. Salman Iqbal, President and Chief Executive Officer of ARY News forgave the three women activists at the request by MQM leaders.

The government is also pursuing the cases in courts against the Imran Khan and TahirulQadiri leaders of the political parties Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan AwamiTehrik (PAT) respectively of attacking media houses and journalists during their protests in Islamabad in 2014.

The MQM, PTI and PAT are opposition political parties and this may be the reason why these cases are being prosecuted while the large number of incidents of killings and serious injuries are not pursued.



Supporters of Mumtaz Qadri Injured Four Journalists to Protest his Hanging

On March 4, supporters of Mumtaz Qadri, the convicted murderer of former governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, attacked Karachi and Lahore offices of Aaj News television channel, its Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) vans and AbbTakk television channel. They also attacked Hyderabad Press Club injuring four, namely Qasim Khan of *Channel 92*, Niaz Vighio of daily *Mehran*, Fahim Babbar of *Sindh TV* and Farhan Khan of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP). They also set on fire computers, equipment and furniture of the press club.

Criminal complaint was registered the day of incident against five persons. The accused were arrested next day but were later released on the bail.

Seven Media Personnel Injured in Baton Charge by Police and Paramilitary Forces

On February 2, seven media personnel were injured in baton charge by the police and paramilitary Rangers while covering the protest demonstration by employees against the privatization of the state-owned Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). No one has been arrested for the incident.





Recommendation by Pakistan Press Foundation to end impunity for crimes against media

Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), a non-governmental organization, is an independent, media documentation and training center, committed to promoting and defending freedom of expression recommends the following steps to control the alarming level of violence against media, and to end impunity for those who attack media practitioners and institutions.

1. Criminal cases should not only be registered but should also be properly investigated and prosecuted against the perpetrators of violence against media.
2. A special prosecutor on violence against media should be established at federal and provincial level to investigate cases of violence against media.
3. Media itself should take the lead in ensuring safety of media practitioners. Local, national and international print, electronic and online media should ensure long-term follow up of cases of assault on media organizations and workers
4. Journalists should be provided with safety and first aid trainings and guidance on how to report in hostile environment. Journalists working in conflict areas should also be provided with guidance in recognizing and dealing with stress and post-traumatic stress.
5. Safety equipment including bulletproof jackets and medical kits should be given to journalists covering the conflicts.
6. Threats and attacks can be reduced to some extent by adopting a professional approach and impartial and unbiased reporting. Journalists, especially those in rural areas, should be imparted trainings on writing skills, language proficiency, editing and interviewing techniques to enhance their capabilities.
7. Employers should provide journalists life and medical insurance and compensation in case of death or injury related to their work. As Pakistani journalists are victims of circumstances that are both local and global in nature, the government should also compensate to the families of journalists, killed in the line of duty.



8. Proper medical treatment, including treatment abroad, should be provided to media workers who have been subjected to violence.
9. In addition to compensation by employers and government, funds should be set up for families of journalists who had been murdered or injured. These funds could be operated by the immediate families of the victimized journalists.
10. There is need to for media organizations to develop standard operating procedures with law enforcement agencies that will allow journalists to cover the conflict situations with greater safety.
11. Arrangements should be made in all major cities to provide refuge and safe houses for the journalists who are forced to leave their homes so that they can live and work in safer cities.
12. Media organizations should interact with all stakeholders including government departments, political parties and groups and security agencies to develop strategies that promote safety of journalists and other media workers.
13. Employers should give journalists facing threats the option of transferring them to safer cities for extended periods of time. The remunerations during these periods should be based on the actual living expenses in these cities, which are generally higher than rural areas.
14. At times, insensitive and misinformed editors push their reporters and photojournalists into the situations where they must put their life and well-being at risk for getting the stories. There is a need to create awareness and sensitizing the owners of the media organizations, as well as, those who are working on desk to realize the ground realities and threats being faced by the journalists working in fields especially in conflict areas.
15. Some international media organizations do provide proper safety trainings and equipment to their correspondents; however, journalists working for international media organizations as stringers or on freelance basis in remote areas of FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan do not receive adequate training or support. As reporting for international media carries greater risk for these stringers, these organizations should provide security training and support, as well as, life and medical insurance for their stringers and freelancers working in conflict area.



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