

15 journalists killed in murderous year for Pakistani media

(Executive Summary from May 3, 2008-May 3, 2009 Intermedia State of Media in Pakistan Annual Report)

Fifteen journalists were killed in the line of duty in Pakistan in the past 12 months (the media year between May 3, 2008 and May 3, 2009) while one committed suicide over non-payment of salary, making this the most murderous year in Pakistan's media history.

These findings emerge from an annual State of Media in Pakistan report on violations against the media in Pakistan produced by Intermedia, a media development and research organization based in Islamabad and authored by media analyst Adnan Rehmat.

May 3 is globally observed as the International Press Freedom Day.

The research report reveals that like other socio-economic groups in the country, the media also paid a heavy price for the war against terrorism on Pakistani territory in the past 12 months as five of the 15 journalists killed died as a result of either suicide bombings or were killed by either security forces or militants.

Of the 15 journalists killed, six were based in Punjab, five in North West Frontier Province, two in Sindh and one each in Balochistan and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata).

During the period in review, there were 11 recorded instances of 35 journalists either arrested by the security forces or kidnapped by unknown persons or militant groups. Of these, 27 journalists were either arrested or kidnapped in three instances in Fata, three in three instances in Sindh, two each cases in NWFP and Punjab and one in Islamabad.

The study also reveals that a total of 61 journalists were assaulted and injured in 35 separate incidents in the period under review. Of these, 29 were injured in Punjab in 16 incidents, 14 in eight incidents in NWFP, six in four instances in Sindh four in three incidents in Islamabad and one in Fata

A total of 104 cases of intimidation or threats (in addition to other categories of violations against the media outlined here) to journalists and media organizations in Pakistan were recorded in the past 12 months. Of these 36 cases were recorded in Punjab, 33 in Islamabad, 12 in NWFP, 11 in Sindh, eight in Fata and four in Balochistan.

In the past one year 11 cases of attacks on media properties were also recorded including three in Fata, two each in Islamabad, Punjab and NWFP and one each cases in the Northern Areas and Balochistan. No such incidents occurred in Sindh and Azad Kashmir (AJK).

There were also 22 recorded instances of forced censorship or gag orders during this period including eight in Islamabad, six in Punjab, four in Sindh and one each in NWFP, Balochistan, Fata and AJK.

In all, there were 248 reported cases of violations against the media in Pakistan in the period between May 3, 2008 and May 3, 2009. The violations included such categories as killings, arrests, kidnappings, assaults, injuries, intimidation, threats, attacks on media properties.

The statistics reveal that Punjab emerges as the most dangerous place to practice journalism in Pakistan with 81 of the 247 cases of violations against the media while Islamabad is second with 48 incidents. Fata is third most dangerous with 41 cases, NWFP fourth with 36 cases, Sindh is fifth with 26 cases, Balochistan is sixth with 13 cases and Northern Areas and AJK seventh with one case each.

Among the journalists killed six were from Punjab including Raja Assad Hameed (based in Rawalpindi) of The Nation and Waqt TV; Malik Tariq Javed (Lahore) of DawnNews TV; Amir Wakeel (Rawalpindi) of Awami Inqilab; S M Shahid (Lahore) of London News; Abdul Razaq Jora (Mianwali) of Royal TV and Tabish Ishtiaq (Lalamusa) of a local newspaper. One journalist from Punjab, Muhammad Azam Khan (Lahore) of Channel 5 committed suicide for non-payment of salary.

Five journalists from NWFP were killed in the past 12 months including Musa Khankhel (Swat) of Geo News and The News; Tahir Awan (Dera Ismail Khan) of Apna Akhbar; Mohammed Imran (Dera Ismail Khan) of Aitidal; Qari Mohammed Shoaib (Swat) of Khabar Kaar and Abdul Aziz Shaheen (Peuchar) of Azadi and Khabar Kaar .

Two journalists were killed in Sindh including Mian Atta Muhammad Siddiki (Shahdadkot) of Urdu Daily and Mohammad Azam Leghari (Dadu) of Dharti TV. One journalist from Balochistan, Wasi Ahmad (Khuzdar) of Khuzdar Daily, and one from Fata, Mohammad Ibrahim (Khar) of Express News were also gunned down.

Two journalists (Tahir Awan and Mohammad Imran) were killed in a suicide blast in Dera Ismail Khan, one (Qari Mohammed Shoaib) was killed by security forces in Swat while all the others were murdered by unknown assailants although a few of them were suspected of being killed by militants.

In the past 12 months, November 2008 proved to be the most bloody with four journalists (S M Shahid, Mian Atta Muhammad Siddiki, Qari Mohammed Shoaib and Abdul Razaq Jora) killed in this month. Three (Mohammed Imran, Tahir Awan and Amir Wakeel) were killed in January 2009, two (Malik Tariq Javed and Raja Assad Hameed) in March 2009, two (Abdul Aziz Shaheen and Mohammad Azam Leghari) in August 2008, one (Wasi Ahmed) in April 2009, one (Muhammad Azam Khan) in December 2008 and one (Mohammed Ibrahim) in May 2008.

Ten of those killed worked for newspapers while five worked for TV channels. —ends

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State of Media in Pakistan - Annual Report
May 2008 – April 2009

Area of Incidents	Killin g	Abducted/ Arrest		Assault / Injured		Intimidat ion	Attack on media propert y	Restrictions / Ban /Censor	Total
		Incident	Victim s	Incident	Victims				
Islamabad	0	1	1	3	4	33	2	8	48
Punjab	6	2	2	16	29	36	2	6	81
Sindh	2	3	3	4	6	11	0	4	26
NWFP	5	2	2	8	14	11	2	1	36
Balochistan	1	0	0	3	7	4	1	1	14
Tribal Areas	1	3	27	1	1	8	3	1	41
North Areas	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
AJ&K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
(Category wise total	15	11	35	35	61	104	11	22	248

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