CHRONICLES OF SHAME:
The Changing Threat Patterns and Demographics of Pakistan Media Landscape
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Executive Summary

Over 150 cases of attacks and violations against media and its practitioners, including journalists, took place in Pakistan over the course of the past year, signifying a worryingly escalating climate of intimidation and harassment that is adversely affecting the freedom of expression and access to information environment in the country, according to research by Freedom Network, the award-winning Pakistan-based media rights watchdog.

According to the key findings of the Freedom Network Press Freedom Barometer 2018, monitored for the period May 1, 2017 to April 1, 2018:

- **Scale of violations against media in Pakistan and their frequency**: At least 157 cases of attacks and violations were documented across all four provinces, Islamabad and tribal areas. That’s an average of about 15 cases of violations a month – one every second day. The violations included killing of journalists, abductions, kidnappings, physical attacks and injuries, arrests, threats and specific cases of harassment.

- **The most dangerous region in Pakistan for journalists**: Islamabad emerged as the riskiest and most dangerous place to practice journalism in the country with 35% of the violations (55 out of 157 cases) recorded in the federal capital.

- **The most targeted medium in Pakistan**: Of the total of 137 attacks and violations against journalists recorded, TV emerged as the single largest victim media with 85 of the cases against its practitioners compared to print, radio and internet.

- **The most serious threat actors targeting media in Pakistan**: In a whopping 39% of all the documented cases, the victims or their families suspect the involvement of the State and its agencies and functionaries in the attacks on them compared to non-state actors, political parties, religious groups and criminal, besides unidentified threat actors.

- **Threats against media houses**: A total of 20 cases of attacks on media houses were recorded with 12 cases of written and verbal threats delivered to them as the largest category of violation against them.
A. Scale of violations against media in Pakistan and their frequency

At least 157 cases of attacks and violations were documented in Pakistan between May 1, 2017 and April 1, 2018 across all four provinces, Islamabad and tribal areas. That’s an average of about 15 cases of violations a month – one every second day.

The documented violations included killing of five journalists for their work, 11 cases of abductions or attempted kidnappings, 39 cases of arrests, detentions or confinements, 50 cases of physical assaults, a majority of which caused bodily injuries, three cases of attacks on homes of journalists, two cases of attacks on family members of journalists, 23 cases of specific written or verbal threats, eight cases of censorship, including a ban or gag order, eight instances of legal cases registered against journalists and eight cases of vandalism against journalists with their equipment deliberately destroyed or stolen.

B. Categories of violations against media in Pakistan

**Killing:** At least five working journalists were documented as killed for their work including Abdul Razzaq, correspondent for ARY News TV channel, in Kasur (Punjab); Bakshish Elahi, the Bureau Chief of K-2 Times, in Haripur (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa); Haroon Khan, a reporter with Sach TV and a stringer for Mashriq TV, in Swabi (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa); Anjum Muneer Raja, a sub-editor with Urdu daily Qaumi Pukaar, in Rawalpindi (Punjab); and Zeeshan Ashraf, correspondent for Nawa-i-Waqt Urdu daily, in Sambrial (Punjab).

**Assault:** Physical assault with intent to injure has emerged as the most common form of threat against working journalists in Pakistan with 50 of the total 157 violations occurring in this shape. At least 50 journalists were physically attacked and sustained bodily injuries for their work. Of these 19 journalists were assaulted in Islamabad, 14 in Punjab, 11 in Sindh and three each in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**Arrest:** The second worst form violations that journalists experienced was arrest, detention or illegal confinement. A total of 39 such cases were documented with 21 journalists arrested, detained or confined for varying durations in Islamabad, seven in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), four each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, two in Balochistan and one in Punjab.

**Threat:** Specific written and verbal threats constituted the third most frequent category of violation against journalists with 23 cases documented. A total of 13 journalists in Balochistan received them, as well as three each in FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad and one in Punjab.

**Abduction:** A total of 11 cases of abductions or attempted kidnapping were documented. These included four in Sindh, three each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad and one in FATA.
Censorship: A total of eight cases of officially enforced censorship were documented. These included four in Punjab, two in Islamabad and one each in FATA and Sindh.

Legal threat: A total of eight cases were documented in which journalists were served with legal notices for various alleged infractions. These included three in Islamabad, two in Sindh and one each in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

Vandalism: A total of eight cases were documented in which journalists faced vandalism related to their work with their equipment and resources deliberately destroyed, seized or stolen. These included three each in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and one each in Punjab and Sindh.

Attack on home: A total of three cases were recorded where the homes of journalists were attacked or invaded related to their work. These included one case each in Islamabad, Punjab and Sindh.

Attack on family: A total of two cases were recorded where the families of journalists were attacked related to their work as a warning. These included one case each in FATA and Sindh.

C. The most dangerous regions in Pakistan for journalists

Islamabad emerged as the riskiest and most dangerous place to practice journalism in Pakistan with 35% of the violations (55 out of 157 cases) recorded in the federal capital. Punjab was the second worst with 17% of the violations (26 cases) followed closely by Sindh with 16% (25 cases), Balochistan with 14% (22 cases) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 10% (16 cases). The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) documented the least number of overall violations at 8% of the total with 13 out of 157 cases.

In terms of threat to the lives of journalists, Punjab emerged as the most dangerous with three journalists killed in the country’s most populous province with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a close second documenting the assassinations of two journalism practitioners.

In terms of physical assaults and bodily harm, Islamabad emerged as the most dangerous region in the country for journalists documenting 19 cases, followed closely by Punjab with 14 and Sindh with 11 cases. Three cases each were recorded in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In terms of arrests, detentions and illegal confinements, of the total 39 cases documented, 21 occurred in Islamabad, seven in FATA, four each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, two in Balochistan and one in Punjab.

In terms of abductions and attempted kidnappings, of the 11 cases documented, Sindh emerged as the riskiest region in Pakistan with four cases, three each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad and one in FATA.
In terms of specific written and verbal threats that journalists received, of the total 19 cases, Balochistan emerged as the worst with 11 documented cases, and three cases each in FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad.

In terms of legal cases registered against journalists, of the total eight cases documented, Islamabad was the worst region with three, Sindh second with two and one each in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.
D. The most targeted medium in Pakistan

Of the total of 137 attacks and violations against journalists recorded, TV emerged as the single largest victim of type of media with 85 of the cases against its practitioners compared to print, radio and internet. Print media was the second most targeted medium with 49 journalists working for it targeted. Two cases each were recorded of journalists working for radio and internet-based journalism platforms targeted.

Of the five journalists killed, three worked for print and two for news TV channels. Of the 50 journalists assaulted and injured, 43 worked for TV and seven for print. Of the 39 journalists arrested, detained or illegally confined, 25 worked for TV and 14 for print media. Of the 11 journalists abducted or faced attempted kidnapping, seven worked for print, two for TV and one each for radio and internet. Of the 11 journalists served specific written or verbal threats, seven worked for print and four for TV. Of the eight journalists against whom legal cases were registered, all worked for print media. Of the five journalists served with an official gag order and faced enforced censorship, three worked for TV, two for print media. Of the three journalists whose homes were attacked or invaded, two worked for TV and one for print media. Of the three journalists who faced vandalism, including destruction, seizure or theft of their equipment, all three worked for TV.

**Threats Attacks and Harassment against Various Types of Media**

- **Television Media**
  - Killed: 02
  - Kidnapped: 02
  - Arrested/Detained: 25
  - Assaulted/Injured: 43
  - Attack on Home: 02
  - Attack on Family: 01
  - Threats-Written: 01
  - Threats-Verbal: 03
  - Banned/Censored: 03
  - Robbery/Others: 03

- **Print Media**
  - Killed: 03
  - Kidnapped: 07
  - Arrested/Detained: 14
  - Assaulted/Injured: 07
  - Attack on Home: 01
  - Threats-Written: 03
  - Threats-Verbal: 04
  - Banned/Censored: 02
  - Legal Case: 08

- **Internet Media**
  - Kidnapped: 01
  - Attack on Family: 01

- **Radio Media**
  - Kidnapped: 01
E. The most serious threat actors targeting media in Pakistan

In a whopping 39% of the 126 documented cases, the victims or their families suspect the involvement of the State and its agencies and functionaries in the attacks on them compared to non-state actors, political parties, religious groups and criminal, besides unidentified threat actors. The second largest category of threat actor is ‘unknown’ – constituting 21% (26 cases). The victims and their family, as well as the authorities and their employers, have been unable to identify perpetrators in this category. Political parties with 12% (15 cases) have emerged as the third largest threat actor. A group of miscellaneous ‘others’ (including feudal lords, land mafia, traders, individual clerics, etc.) with 19% (12 cases) are also a major threat actor. The remaining categories include ‘non-state actors’ with 7% (9 cases), ‘religious groups’ with 6% (8 cases) and criminal gangs with 6% (seven cases).

Among specific threat actors, the State authorities were not suspected of involvement in any of the five journalists killed but allegedly involved in kidnapping four, arresting, detaining and keeping in illegal confinement 20 journalists, assaulting and injuring eight, threatening two, enforcing censorship on eight and registering a legal case against seven journalists.

‘Unknown’ actors were involved in killing of three journalists, kidnapping of seven, keeping in illegal confinement three, assaulting and injuring five, attacking the homes of two, attacking the family of one, issuing written and verbal threats to three and vandalizing two journalists.

Political parties were allegedly involved in killing one journalist, keeping in illegal confinement six, assaulting and injuring five, attacking the home of one and vandalizing two journalists. Religious groups were allegedly involved in assaulting and injuring five journalists and registering a case against one journalist.
Threat Actors Attacking and Harassing Journalists and Media

- **STATE ACTORS**
  - Kidnapped: 03
  - Arrested/Detained: 20
  - Harassment: 08
  - Assaulted /Injured: 05
  - Threats - Verbal: 02
  - Banned/Censored: 08
  - Legal Case: 07

- **UNKNOWN**
  - Kidnapped: 07
  - Arrested/Detained: 03
  - Harassment: 04
  - Assaulted /Injured: 05
  - Attack on Home: 01
  - Threats - Written: 01
  - Threats - Verbal: 02
  - Others: 02

- **POLITICAL GROUPS & POLITICIANS**
  - Kidnapped: 03
  - Arrested/Detained: 03
  - Harassment: 06
  - Assaulted /Injured: 05
  - Attack on Home: 01
  - Threats - Written: 01
  - Threats - Verbal: 02
  - Others: 02

- **NON-STATE ACTORS/MUGGERS**
  - Kidnapped: 01
  - Assaulted /Injured: 04
  - Attack on Family: 01
  - Robbery: 01

- **RELIGIOUS GROUPS/LEGAL CRIMINALS**
  - Kidnapped: 01
  - Arrested/Detained: 04
  - Harassment: 04
  - Assaulted /Injured: 04
  - Threats - Verbal: 02
  - Legal Case: 02
  - Others: 02

- **Others**
  - Kidnapped: 05
  - Arrested/Detained: 08
  - Harassment: 03
  - Assaulted /Injured: 08
  - Threats - Verbal: 02
  - Legal Case: 07

- **Killed**
  - 07
F. Threats against media houses

A total of 20 cases of attacks on media houses were recorded with 12 cases of written and verbal threats delivered to them as the largest category of violation against them. Other categories of violations against them included – enforced censorship and ban in three cases, attacks on premises in two cases and a legal case registered against one media house.

Threats Attacks and Harassment against Media Institutions

- **Total Cases**: 20
- **Attack on Office**: 10%
- **Threats - Written**: 10%
- **Threats - Verbal**: 50%
- **Put on Notice / Show Cause Notice**: 5%
- **Other**: 10%
- **Formally Banned / Censored**: 15%
- **Legal Case**: 0
- **Fined**: 0
- **Total Cases**: 20
G. List of Key Cases of Victim Journalists

The following is a list of key cases of victim journalists from the period under review. It is not an exhaustive list, which is separately maintained by Freedom Network.

JOURNALISTS KILLED

**Abdul Razzaq**
The correspondent for *ARY News* TV channel was killed on May 17, 2017, in Kasur (Punjab) by robbers who fired at him for filming one of their robberies. He died on the spot.

**Bakhshish Elahi**
The Bureau Chief of *K-2 Times* was killed on June 11, 2017 in Haripur (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) by unknown motorbike-borne gunmen near his home. He died on the spot.

**Haroon Khan**
The reporter for *Sach TV* and a stringer for *Mashriq TV* was killed on October 12, 2017 in Swabi (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) by unidentified gunmen outside his home. He died before reaching hospital.

**Anjum Muneer Raja**
The sub-editor for *Quami Pukaar* was shot dead by motorcycle-borne assailants on March 1, 2018 in Rawalpindi (Punjab) while returning home after work. He died on the spot.

**Zeeshan Ashraf**
The correspondent for *Nawa-i-Waqt* was gunned down in Sambrial (Punjab) while reporting about protests against local taxation. He was shot dead by a local official and died on the spot. His last spoken words about the unfolding attack were recorded on his mobile phone.

JOURNALISTS WITH LEGAL CASES AGAINST THEM

**Zafarullah Achakzai (Quetta)**
The reporter for *Qudrat* Urdu daily was arrested in Quetta (Balochistan) on June 25, 2017 by Frontiers Corps and charged under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 and handed to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for criticizing online the failure of law enforcement agencies. He was freed later but still faces criminal charges PECA.

**Abdullah Zafar (Karachi)**
The reporter for *The Nation*, was abducted outside his home on July 9, 2017 in Karachi allegedly by security agencies personnel. He was freed after a day but was tortured in captivity about his online posts about “missing persons.” A case was registered against him under PECA.

**Sheikh Wali (Lahore)**
The editor of daily *Jahan-e-Pakistan* was booked in Lahore on July 11, 2017 for alleged hate speech for authoring and printing an article on one of Islam’s holiest persons.
Jabbar Usmani (Naseerabad)
The correspondent for Waqt News channel was booked in Naseerabad, Balochistan, under the PECA law for violating its statutes banning criticism of security policies online.

Shabbir Seham (Islamabad)
The correspondent for Daily Times newspaper was booked on October 7, 2017 in Islamabad under Anti-Terrorism Act and summoned by the Gilgit Baltistan Anti-Terrorist Court for alleged defamation of some ruling party legislators in Gilgit Baltistan.

Hamid Mir (Islamabad)
The senior journalist for Geo News channel and Jang newspaper was, under orders of the Islamabad High Court, booked for alleged conspiracy to kill a former intelligence operative Khalid Khawaja, who was killed in April 2010 in the tribal areas by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan.

Shabbir Usmani (Karachi) December 19, 2017: Karachi
The reporter for Express News channel was booked by police on December 19, 2017 in Karachi for alleged harassment on the complaint of a local religious seminary.

DISCLAIMERS

1. **DATA:** The data used and analyzed in this report was generated by the Pakistan Press Club Safety Hubs Network, which Freedom Network helped establish and manages in partnership with National Press Club, Karachi Press Club, Lahore Press Club, Quetta Press Club, Peshawar Press Club and Landikotal Press Club. The hubs monitor and document attacks and threats against journalists using pre-approved templates with cases cross-verified by press clubs, journalists’ unions, media houses. The hubs also provide intermediation assistance for victims. In serious cases the victims are assisted through the Pakistan Journalists Safety Fund (PJSF), also managed by Freedom Network.

2. **LIABILITY:** The list of threat actors is based on information provided by victims or families and alleged involvement of suspected threat actors cannot be independently verified by either the Pakistan Press Clubs Safety Hubs Network or Freedom Network.

3. **LIST OF CASES:** The list of cases considered for the analysis is based on cases actually documented by the Pakistan Press Clubs Safety Hubs Network. This is not necessarily an exhaustive list. The actual number of cases of violations against journalists may be higher.
ABOUT FREEDOM NETWORK (www.fnpk.org)

Freedom Network is a Pakistan-based independent media and development sector research, advocacy and training organization registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). It was established in 2013.

In 2017, Freedom Network was awarded the prestigious global French Human Rights Prize 2017 by the Government of France for “its efforts for safety and protection of journalists and promotion of freedom of expression.”

OUR MISSION: To protect civil liberties, including freedom of expression and access to information, and promote an informed society that sees media as a key partner in a democratic and pluralist Pakistan.

OUR OBJECTIVES AND EXPERTISE:

1. **To serve as a watchdog on the right to freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and Internet and of civil society**
   a. Through 24/7 monitoring of the rights to freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and online
   b. Through monitoring and documenting violations of freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and Internet
   c. Through researching the causes, symptoms and case studies of the violations of freedom of expression in all forms of media
   d. Through monitoring violation of the right to expression of non-media sections of society such as human rights groups, development practitioners, and the performing arts industry.

2. **To promote an ethical and professional media**
   a. By promoting, supporting and conducting advocacy, research, analysis and training initiatives for media
   b. By promoting, supporting and conducting initiatives to help civil society strengthen its stakeholding in a pluralistic, independent, open and professional media with emphasis on professional ethics and journalism best practices
   c. By strengthening the interface between media and civil society by improving professional development communications within and for development sector organizations as well as for their supporters and donors
   d. By promoting a culture of safety and security for journalists and media houses through advocacy, research and training on issues of safety and impunity against journalists

3. **To serve as an advocate for freedom of expression and access to information as fundamental rights**
   a. Through a broad range of advocacy, research and analysis initiatives
   b. By promoting and building synergies between and among media and civil society stakeholders
   c. By promoting citizens’ participation on issues relating to freedom of expression and access to information
   d. By conducting assessment missions, studies, research, translations of resources in multiple languages on its own and for other organizations for wider national and international audiences