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10 journalists killed, 10 kidnapped, 70 assaulted in Pakistan in 2009

- **Research report reveals 163 cases of abuses against media, including**

10 attacks on media offices and 35 gag orders & censorship cases

- **Punjab, NWFP & Islamabad become dangerous places to practice journalism**

ISLAMABAD (December 30, 2009): The year 2009 proved to be another bloody year of the decade for media in Pakistan in which 10 journalists paid the ultimate price of practicing a difficult trade in the backdrop of rising terrorism and militancy and were killed in the line of duty.

Of these 10 journalists 4 were killed in Punjab, 3 in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and one each in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Balochistan and Islamabad, according to the annual research on the state of media in Pakistan, released here Wednesday by Intermedia, a Pakistani media development organization that focuses on media research, advocacy and training.

In total, the Intermedia research revealed, 163 cases of direct attacks on media took place in Pakistan in 2009 including murders, assaults, kidnappings, explicit threats, censorship cases and attacks on media properties and establishments.

Punjab bore the brunt of these attacks with 54 cases and NWFP a close behind with 52. Islamabad was the surprise third biggest victim of attacks on media with 28 cases. Sindh recorded a total of 12 attacks, 6 each were recorded in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), and FATA and 3 in Balochistan.

The report revealed that there were 7 recorded cases of abductions of journalists in 2009 in which a total of 10 journalists were kidnapped. Four of the victim journalists were in NWFP, 2 in Islamabad and one each in Balochistan, FATA, Punjab and Sindh.

The report also documented at least 24 cases of assaults on working journalists across the country in the calendar year in which 70 journalists were injured. The highest number of journalists – 36 – injured was in Punjab while 12 were maimed in Islamabad, 10 in NWFP, 7 in Sindh and 5 in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK).

At least 28 journalists in 2009 were intimidated by receiving explicit threats in person or over the phone. Of these, 9 journalists were in Islamabad, 8 in NWFP, 73 in Sindh, and one in FATA.

The Intermedia report also documented at least 35 cases of official gag orders, censorship or restrictions on publication or broadcast in 2009. Of these the highest number of cases, 23, were in NWFP while 4 were in Punjab, 3 in Islamabad and one each in Sindh, Balochistan, FATA and Gilgit-Baltistan.

In 2009, at least 10 cases of physical and armed attacks on media property and establishments, exemplified by the suicide attack on the Peshawar Press Club on December 22. Of these attacks 4 were in NWFP, 2 each in FATA and Punjab and one each in Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Intermedia report said the rising terrorism, militancy and military action in Pakistan during 2009 also affected media in a major way as exemplified by the suicide attack on the Peshawar Press Club. This escalation in violence to an unprecedented level against the media is a strike against the Pakistani media's successful role in shaping public opinion against religious extremism and terrorism, it said.

“At least 45 journalists have been killed in Pakistan in the last five years, several by suspected militants, but this is the first time that suicide squads of terrorists have targeted media persons as a specific, overt target, indicating a dramatic increase in the level of threats facing the media in the country,” Adnan Rehmat, the Executive Director of Intermedia, said.

Rehmat said the Peshawar Press Club is the biggest media establishment in the conflict ravaged NWFP and FATA and even including the Balochistan province. “Targeting the press club means an effort to browbeat the courageous journalists of the region who are already working in difficult conditions and in one of the most dangerous areas in the world to practice journalism,” he said.

“Shooting the messenger will not kill the message – Pakistani media is a bulwark against terror and totalitarianism and journalists across the country are at the frontlines, battling grave odds to do a tremendous job of keeping the people out of information darkness,” Rehmat added.

According to the Intermedia report, among those killed in Pakistan in 2009 were the following:

PUNJAB: Amir Wakeel, reporter of daily Awami Inqilab, gunned down in January 2009 by unidentified persons in Lahore; Malik Tahir, reporter of DawnNews TV killed in March by unidentified persons in Lahore; Raja Asad, reporter of The Nation daily killed in March by unidentified persons in Rawalpindi; and Muhammad Akram, reporter for daily Faisalabad, killed in June by unidentified persons in Faisalabad.

NWFP: Mohammad Imran, reporter for Etidal daily and Tahir Awan, reporter for Apna Akhbar daily, both killed in a suicide bombing in January in Dera Ismail Khan; and Musa Khan, reporter for GeoNews TV, shot dead by unidentified persons in Swat in February.

BALOCHISTAN: Wasi Ahmad, a reporter based in Khuzdar, shot dead by unidentified persons in Khuzdar in April.

ISLAMABAD: Raza Ali, a long-standing journalist, was murdered at his house in Islamabad in September. His arms and legs were tied and he was severely tortured before being killed.

FATA: Unidentified gunmen shot and killed senior Afghan journalist Janullah Hashimzada in Khyber Agency in August.

Following is a tabulation of violations and abuses against the media in Pakistan during 2009.

Chronicles of Violations and Abuses against Media in Pakistan during Calendar Year 2009
INTERMEDIA Pakistan

Area of Incidents	Killed	Abducted/ Arrests		Assaulted / Injured		Intimidated / Threatened	Attacks on media property / establishment	Gag order / censorship / ban	TOTAL
		Incidents	Victims	Incidents	Victims				
Islamabad	1	1	2	3	12	9	1	3	**28**
Punjab	4	1	1	9	36	7	2	4	**54**
Sindh	0	1	1	4	7	3	0	1	**12**
NWFP	3	2	4	7	10	8	4	23	**52**
Balochistan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	**03**
FATA	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	**06**
Gilgit-Baltistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	**02**
AJ &K	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	1	**06**
Category-wise TOTAL	**10**	7	**10**	24	**70**	**28**	**10**	**35**	**163**

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