

# Roots of Impunity

*Pakistan's Endangered Press*

*And the Perilous Web of Militancy, Security, and Politics*

By Elizabeth Rubin



A special report of the Committee to Protect Journalists





# Roots of Impunity

*Pakistan's Endangered Press*

*And the Perilous Web of Militancy, Security, and Politics*

**By Elizabeth Rubin**



*A special report of the Committee to Protect Journalists*

Issued May 2013



Defending Journalists Worldwide



Founded in 1981, the Committee to Protect Journalists responds to attacks on the press worldwide. CPJ documents hundreds of cases every year and takes action on behalf of journalists and news organizations without regard to political ideology. To maintain its independence, CPJ accepts no government funding. CPJ is funded entirely by private contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

*Roots of Impunity*

*Pakistan's Endangered Press and the Perilous Web of Militancy, Security, and Politics*

Editorial Director: **Bill Sweeney**

Senior Editor: **Elana Beiser**

Deputy Editors: **Kamal Singh Masuta, Shazdeh Omari**

Designer: **Nancy Novick**

Copy Editor: **Lew Serviss**

Map: **John Emerson**

© 2013 Committee to Protect Journalists, New York. All rights reserved.

Printed by United Book Press.

**CHAIRMAN**

Sandra Mims Rowe

**VICE CHAIR**

Kathleen Carroll

**HONORARY CHAIRMAN**

Terry Anderson

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Joel Simon

**DIRECTORS**

Andrew Alexander

Franz Allina

Christiane Amanpour

Dean Baquet

John S. Carroll

Rajiv Chandrasekaran

Sheila Coronel

Josh Friedman

Anne Garrels

James C. Goodale

Cheryl Gould

Arianna Huffington

Charlayne Hunter-Gault

Jonathan Klein

Jane Kramer

Mhamed Krichen

David Laventhol

Lara Logan

Rebecca MacKinnon

Kati Marton

Michael Massing

Geraldine Fabrikant Metz

Victor Navasky

Andres Oppenheimer

Clarence Page

Norman Pearlstine

Ahmed Rashid

Gene Roberts

María Teresa Ronderos

Diane Sawyer

David Schlesinger

Paul C. Tash

Jacob Weisberg

Mark Whitaker

Brian Williams

Matthew Winkler

**ADVISORY BOARD**

Tom Brokaw

Gwen Ifill

Steven L. Isenberg

David Marash

Charles L. Overby

Erwin Potts

Dan Rather

John Seigenthaler

Paul E. Steiger

COVER PHOTO: A protester with a poster of the murdered Karachi reporter Wali Khan Babar. AP/MOHAMMAD SAJJAD

TITLE PAGE PHOTO: In Quetta, where several journalists have been killed, a demonstration against anti-press violence. AP/ARSHAD BUTT

## ABOUT THIS REPORT



A security guard outside the Supreme Court in Islamabad. REUTERS/FAISAL MAHMOOD

This report was written by **Elizabeth Rubin**, an independent journalist who has covered Pakistan and South Asia for numerous publications, including *The New York Times Magazine*. She has reported from conflict zones around the world, including Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Balkans. The Committee to Protect Journalists commissioned Rubin to conduct this independent investigation into the dangerous conditions facing members of the news media in Pakistan.

**Bob Dietz**, CPJ's Asia program coordinator, wrote the introduction to this report and prepared its recommendations. The appendix of journalists killed from 2003 to 2012 is based on the research of CPJ staff over the past decade. **Sumit Galhotra**, CPJ Steiger fellow, contributed new reporting to the capsule reports of journalists killed. Galhotra also contributed research to several other sections.

Pakistan is the fourth-deadliest nation in the world for the press since 2003, CPJ research shows. Although a number of journalists have died in suicide bombings or other conflict-related circumstances in the country, at least 23 have been targeted for murder. CPJ research also shows Pakistan has one of the world's worst records of impunity in anti-press violence. Not one journalist murder over the past decade has resulted in a conviction.

This report examines the targeted killings of reporters Wali Khan Babar and Mukarram Khan Aatif, along with the roots of impunity in Pakistan. The nation's press, while free and robust, faces extraordinary danger from militants, political groups, criminals, intelligence agents, and military and government officials. Addressing the culture of impunity in anti-press violence is central to the nation's future.

An Urdu-language version of this report is available at [cpj.org/reports/roots-urdu.pdf](http://cpj.org/reports/roots-urdu.pdf).

# CONTENTS



Pakistan Air Force cadets in Karachi. REUTERS/AKHTAR SOOMRO

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
BY BOB DIETZ	
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>THE MURDER OF WALI KHAN BABAR</b>	
<i>Babar was an unusual face on the air in Karachi: Popular and handsome, he was a Pashtun from Baluchistan. He was also a rising star at Geo TV, which was grooming him to be an anchor. His murder provides an unfortunate prism through which to study the state of media, justice, power, and politics in Pakistan.</i>	
<b>VERBATIM: THREATS, PROMISES, AND FEARS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>A DEATH IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA</b>	
<i>Officially, there is no mystery to Mukarram Khan Aatif's death. He is another casualty of the war on terror, executed by the Taliban because of his reporting for a U.S. government-backed news outlet. But unofficially, many do not believe Aatif was killed on orders of the Taliban, at least not for the reasons publicly stated.</i>	
<b>FOR VOA REPORTERS, A DIFFICULT BALANCE</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>A DEADLY DECADE</b>	<b>26</b>



The Pakistani flag at the mausoleum of the country's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. AFP/ASIF HASSAN

## CHAPTER III

28

### INTIMIDATION, MANIPULATION, AND RETRIBUTION

*A couple of years ago, prominent journalists began publicizing the threats they were receiving from intelligence agencies. It was a risky calculation, but silence, they reasoned, encouraged further intimidation. Has their tactic worked? For the well-known, it's offered some protection. But for journalists who work out of the spotlight, threats still lead to something worse.*

#### 'IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS TO ME'

34

### CONCLUSION

35

*The murder of Saleem Shahzad in May 2011 galvanized journalists across Pakistan in a way that few other events have. For a short time their power was felt. They secured a high-level investigation. They named intelligence officers who had threatened Shahzad and other journalists. But two years later, precious little has come of their efforts.*

### CPJ'S RECOMMENDATIONS

38

*The organization's recommendations to Pakistani authorities, news media, and the international community.*

### APPENDIX

40

#### JOURNALISTS KILLED 2003-2012

*Capsule reports on journalist fatalities.*

## INTRODUCTION



MQM supporters with portraits of party leader Altaf Hussain. REUTERS/AKHTAR SOOMRO

*By Bob Dietz*

**A**t least 42 journalists have been killed—23 of them murdered—in direct relation to their work in Pakistan in the past decade, CPJ research shows. Not one murder since 2003 has been solved, not a single conviction won. Despite repeated demands from Pakistani and international journalist organizations, not one of these crimes has even been put to a credible trial.

This perfect record of impunity has fostered an increasingly violent climate for journalists. Fatalities have risen significantly in the past five years, and today, Pakistan consistently ranks among the deadliest countries in the world for the press.

The violence comes in the context of a government's struggle to deliver basic human rights to all citizens. The independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan laid it out succinctly when it said in its annual report in March 2012 that "militancy, growing lawlessness, and ethnic, sectarian and political violence exposed the government's inability to ensure security and law and order for people in large parts of the country."

It is in this environment that reporter Elizabeth Rubin investigated the targeted killings of two journalists—Wali Khan Babar in Karachi and Mukarram Khan Aatif in the tribal areas—along with the underlying culture of manipulation, intimidation, and retribution that has led to so many other killings. Her reporting found:

- An array of threatening actors that includes not only militants, criminals, and warlords, but also political, military, and intelligence operatives.
- A weak civilian government that acquiesces to the

will of the intelligence services, the army, and criminal elements in the political parties.

- Intelligence services that aggressively pursue a political agenda; that pressure, manipulate, and intimidate news media; and that, at times, collaborate with or enable the Taliban and other militants.
- A criminal justice system that is weak and lacks independence, leaving it vulnerable to political pressure.
- Police who are insufficiently trained in such fundamental areas as forensics and security.
- Government officials who, in a climate of widespread impunity, feel free to intimidate journalists.
- And news media that, while free and robust, are also manipulated by the intelligence services, the military, and the political parties.

"It's rough out there," Najam Sethi told CPJ. Sethi, longtime editor of *The Friday Times* and host of a popular Urdu-language political program on Geo TV, and Jugnu Mohsin, his wife and fellow journalist, have lived under intense threat for years. "One never knows whether the Taliban is gunning for you or whether the agencies are gunning for you," said Sethi, who is based in Lahore. "And sometimes you don't know because one is operating at the behest of the other."

Sethi, a strong critic of militant groups, is equally as critical of the government, the military, and the country's intelligence agencies. In the Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the border with Afghanistan, where Aatif was killed, the threatening actors include the military and intelligence services, militants, weapons and drug traders, and various warlord groups that the government plays against one another. The nation's larg-





The Taliban claimed responsibility for this roadside bombing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. REUTERS/M. ABDULLAH

est city, Karachi, where Babar was murdered, is a combat zone of political parties fighting for turf, militant groups establishing rear-echelon redoubts, and criminal gangs hungering for profit. At least three journalists have been killed in Karachi because of their work in the past decade.

The intelligence services feel free to pursue their own political agendas; their actions are partly the cause and partly the result of the nationwide free-for-all of violence. The military, which has taken power three times since the country's founding in 1947, brooks little criticism and never hesitates to threaten journalists who dare to speak out. Government, military, and intelligence officials are suspected of involvement in at least seven journalist murders in the past decade, CPJ research shows. Weak civilian governments have wielded little control over them.

Working in this milieu are news media surprisingly free and robust. An explosion of private cable television broadcasters that began under Gen. Pervez Musharraf has resulted in more than 90 stations today. Print and radio outlets thrive. But journalists also say that media outlets are manipulated by the military and intelligence services, and that news organizations have not met the escalating risks with commensurate security and training measures. In recent years, the industry's news managers have undertaken several sincere attempts to raise the quality and security of Pakistani media. Most admit it is still a work in progress.

In May 2011, a CPJ delegation met with President Asif Ali Zardari and several cabinet members. At that meeting, the president pledged to address the country's record of impunity in anti-press violence. In fact, nothing substantial was undertaken, and the record has only worsened. In most cases documented by CPJ, little

has been done beyond the filing of a preliminary police report. In 2012, when the United Nations' educational wing, UNESCO, drafted a plan to combat impunity in journalist murders worldwide, Pakistan lobbied furiously, if unsuccessfully, to have it derailed. A senior Pakistani official told CPJ at the time that it would be "unfair to say outrightly that Pakistan has a high rate of unresolved cases." The facts—23 murders, all unsolved—show otherwise. The president's office did not respond to CPJ's request for comment on the findings of this report.

Pakistan's leaders have not met their obligation to guarantee the rule of law and fundamental human rights. The newly elected government owes its citizens a criminal justice system that is independent, its investigators and prosecutors sufficiently supported with staff and resources to bring about successful prosecutions. Many journalist murders go unprosecuted because of intimidation, interference, or worse from political parties, the military, and the intelligence services. That must end.

Given the breakdowns, Pakistani journalists have begun addressing the problems on their own. Larger media houses are strengthening training and security. Some are setting out guidelines for ethical conduct. Journalists are drawing on a long heritage of professional solidarity to speak against anti-press harassment.

As one of the nation's strongest democratic institutions—and one of its most imperiled—the press has both the ability and the urgent need to find effective solutions. ■

*Bob Dietz is Asia program coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists. He reported from Pakistan in 2009 during the government's military offensive in Swat, and was part of the CPJ delegation that met with President Zardari in 2011.*



## CHAPTER I



Journalists decry the murder of Wali Khan Babar. AFP/ASIF HASSAN

# The Murder of Wali Khan Babar

On January 13, 2011, Wali Khan Babar, a 28-year-old correspondent for Geo TV, was driving home after covering another day of gang violence in Karachi. Babar was an unusual face on the airwaves: Popular and handsome, he was a Pashtun from Zhob in Baluchistan near the border with Afghanistan. For Geo, it was a rare boon to have a Pashtun in Karachi, and so the station planned to send him abroad for training to become an anchor.

Pashtuns, represented by the Pashtun nationalist Awami National Party, and Muhajirs, represented by the Muttahida Quami Movement, have been enmeshed in violent attacks and counterattacks at a level not seen since the 1990s, and Babar was passionate about covering and stopping them. For a time, he was able to mingle easily among the competing forces. He reported on clashes, extortion, drug dealing, and land grabbing. He knew he was in treacherous water, but he was optimistic and, as he told one of his colleagues, he thought he could forge a truce between the ANP and MQM. But lately he was nervous. He told his boss that the MQM was after him. He told a Pashtun colleague that he thought people were following him home and watching his movements. “I get phone calls every day with threats,” said a Geo supervisor, “and unfortunately we didn’t realize the gravity of why he was saying that.”

The day before, on January 12, 2011, Mohammad

Shahrukh Khan, aka Mani, was ordered to follow Babar home, but he couldn’t find the reporter. Mani, a young Muhajir and MQM member, had worked in his father’s paan and confectionary shop until he got involved with the MQM’s Faisal Mota, a community organizer and squad leader. Once Mani joined the MQM he did various jobs—selling cigarettes, brokering, election campaigning. On January 13, he got another call from Mota, who told him to go back to Geo offices where another MQM comrade would give him a car to follow Babar.

Mani arrived outside the offices of Geo around Asr, the afternoon prayer. Two MQM guys named Zeeshan and Liaqat were already there and gave him the keys to a silver Suzuki, parked behind Babar’s car. They had put a 50-rupee credit on Mani’s mobile and told him to call when Babar pulled out. Around 8:30 p.m., Babar got in his car and began his drive home. Mani called Zeeshan: “He’s leaving.” He then called his boss, Faisal Mota, who kept him on the phone to narrate the exact route—through the Saddar area, by the lines for cricket, past the post office and the Esso station. And then suddenly there was Zeeshan. Babar was stuck in traffic in Liaquatabad, an exclusively Muhajir neighborhood, with Mani behind him. Zeeshan, wearing a cap, went in front of Mani up to Babar’s car, raised a black pistol, and fired six or seven times through the

## IT SEEMED THE JUDICIAL WHEELS WERE TURNING. EXCEPT THAT SIMULTANEOUSLY, SOMEONE WAS MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO THWART JUSTICE.

window. We know all this from Mani's videotaped confession, which can be found online.

Mani panicked and fled. He called Faisal Mota. What's going on? By the time he got to Faisal Mota's house several MQM guys were already there—men with names like Waseem Commando and Shahid Commando. Zeeshan arrived soon after and then Mota walked in. Mota told Mani to relax and say not a word, but Mani left the next day for Lahore, where he stayed for two months. Upon his return to Karachi he went to Mota's office in Gulshan. By now the police were on to them, and Mota ordered them to head to Hyderabad where Liaquat, another plotter, was in hiding. It was too late. Shortly after they left Mota's office, Mani and four others saw the police moving in. A firefight broke out. Somehow Mota, the ringleader, got away.

On April 7, 2011, the police held a news conference announcing the arrest of Mani and four others. Twelve days later, stories began appearing in *Pakistan Today* with details of the murder culled from the suspects' statements to a Joint Investigation Team. According to the team's report, Mota had apparently received the assassination order around January 1 from Agha Murtaza, a South Africa-based MQM operative who investigators said has controlled several hit cells for years. Mota had convened a meeting at his house on January 7 and assigned different MQM members to monitor Babar at various locations, including the reporter's residence and a Peshawari ice cream shop near the reporter's house.

And so it seemed for a moment that in this city where more than 100 people are targeted for murder every month, many of them tortured and mutilated, that the judicial wheels were turning, investigations and arrests happening.

Except that simultaneously, someone was making every effort to thwart justice. A few weeks after Babar was murdered, one by one, a police informant, two police constables, and the brother of an investigating officer were found murdered. All of them were connected to the Babar investigation. The account in the *Express Tribune* was chilling: The first victim was a police informant who was found dead in a sack with a note in his pocket. The message said that head constable Arshad Kundi would be "next." Kundi was the informant's handler. The second victim was actually police constable Asif Rafiq, killed in a drive-by shooting by two men on a motorcycle. He was on the scene when Babar was murdered and had identified the plotters' vehicle. The third to die was indeed Kundi, also shot in a drive-by motorcycle attack. The fourth was the young

brother of a police chief, Shafiq Tanoli, who was part of the investigation team from Liaquatabad. It may just be coincidence, but around the same time, *Pakistan Today* journalist Tariq Habib, who had published details of the Joint Investigation Team report on the Babar killing, was fired without explanation, according to his colleagues at the Karachi Press Club. Habib received threats, was chased on the streets of Karachi, and was finally forced to change his residence, they told me.

On April 9, two days after the suspects were arrested in the Babar case, Zulfiqar Mirza, home minister of Sindh and senior vice president of the Pakistan People's Party, announced that he was being forced out of his job due to pressure from MQM leader Altaf Hussain. In the ensuing weeks, Mirza unleashed his wrath against the MQM, saying that it was responsible for Babar's murder and the subsequent killings, that Western governments were backing the party, and that Hussain had called President Asif Ali Zardari six times to have him removed. The ravings of an embittered politician? The truth? A political agenda? "Well, once you start speaking the truth there is no stopping, and Zulfiqar realized late that he was damaging the People's Party," a close friend and media mogul in Karachi said in explaining why the once voluble Mirza went completely silent by 2012. Others suggest it was because his son was elected to Parliament.

But the larger questions remain: Did the MQM really go to such lengths to staunch the investigation? If so, why?

**B**abar's murder provides an unfortunate prism through which to study the state of the news media and the justice system, the nature of power and politics, and the often toxic effect of Western policy on Pakistanis.

History and demographics are never far from what causes murder in Karachi. The MQM was founded in 1984 by Hussain, a passionate student activist who championed the rights of Muhajirs—the Urdu-speaking migrants who left India during partition for the Muslim homeland—and went on to declare them a separate entity within Pakistan. He managed to build up one of the most powerful political-militant parties in the country, a party that was meant to be classless, of the people, and anti-feudal.

In a way it was. The Muhajirs have higher education levels and lower birth rates, but they also have no land to fall back on. The Sindhis have Sindh. The Pashtuns have Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Punjabis have Punjab. The Baluch have Baluchistan. The Muhajirs in Sindh became urbanites with a siege mentality. Over the



## ALTAH HUSSAIN RULES HIS PARTY FROM EXILE IN LONDON AND HIS ABSENCE SEEMS ONLY TO ENHANCE HIS STATUS.

past three decades they have fought the Sindhis, the Pashtuns, the PPP, and the ANP; they have populated every institution in Karachi and, of course, have ties to the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, or ISI, and the Pakistani Army. Their drive is about survival and ownership of Karachi, the financial capital of Pakistan.

In the 1980s, Gen. Zia ul-Haq encouraged and bolstered the MQM to damage the PPP. After all, he had seized power in a military coup that overthrew the PPP and he had executed the PPP's hero, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Turf wars exploded all over the city and by the 1990s the violence was so extreme that the streets of Karachi turned into dumping grounds for the mutilated dead. The MQM brutalized not only rival party militants but also anyone who criticized the party, including journalists. Benazir Bhutto tried to stop the violence with more brutality. Naseerullah Babar, her infamous home minister, raised an anti-terror force that broke into the MQM's intelligence network and its cells and then committed hundreds of extrajudicial killings.

In 1999, when Gen. Pervez Musharraf took over in a military coup, he needed the MQM to build a coalition. So he resurrected it, brought it into the government, and watched it restore an even more effective and brutal militant wing. Once reconstituted, the MQM sought revenge. Just about every police station head of office who had been involved in the 1990s crackdown was killed, often in daylight, often by snipers. Fifty-two have been murdered to date, with one killed shortly before my visit in April 2012.

"They don't forget these things," said a senior newspaper editor who spoke on condition of anonymity. "We vet every word, every sentence written about the MQM," he added. "I am responsible for 150 journalists working here. I have to be careful if a byline is given on a story. I have to look at the mood of the reporter because he faces the wrath. The MQM is the most organized militant group in this country." That is a powerful statement in a place that is home to Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Tehrik-e-Taliban, and all the rest of the militant groups. "At least if the Taliban threaten you, you can ask for help from the authorities," the editor said, because the ISI will act as go-between. "With these guys? No."

While many loathe the party, they also respect it. The MQM operates as a well-oiled machine unlike any other political party in the country, more like Hamas with organizational cells and high-tech efficiency. It's built parks and overpasses to manage traffic. Karachi functions at a relatively high level given its population of 18 million. The party has also developed a system

of controlling the media. The cable operators are now under its influence. "If we say at 8 p.m. we will air an interview with Afaq," said a Geo TV editor, referring to Afaq Ahmed, the leader of a splinter Muhajir group that calls itself the real MQM, "the cable will be shut and will come back at 8:55."

Today Altaf Hussain rules his party from exile in London and his absence seems only to enhance his status. Many told me that the Muhajir elite may hate the MQM but they will support it. Why? "They defend minorities. They defend women. They are efficient. Things never happen with the PPP. They are seen as lazy and unconcerned, feudals," said a Karachi journalist and filmmaker who has written reports on the Pakistani media. And then he added, "At least with the MQM you can talk to them, even if they'll kill you."

**Y**ou must go see Nine Zero, I'm told. That is the name of the MQM's headquarters, and it's a measure of Hussain's cult-like stature. Nine Zero were the last two numbers of his home telephone when he still lived in Karachi. Nine Zero is in Azizabad, a middle-class neighborhood, though as you approach and pass through the security barricades you have the feeling you're entering warlord territory. The day I arrived a red carpet was being laid from a dais down an aisle between dozens of carefully aligned chairs. The British high commissioner was coming for a ceremony. I was met by an escort with a handheld radio, and my driver was sent around the corner to wait.

Hussain's poster is there saluting the room. Everything is neat, organized, and swift. The spokesman I'm meeting is Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, the provincial minister for youth affairs in Sindh. He is impeccably dressed: tan suit, purple floral tie, hair flattened and swiped down on the sides. But the most remarkable thing about him is that he speaks in paragraphs. Non-stop. I tell him that everyone says the MQM murdered Wali Khan Babar. The first thing he lets me know is that he has high-level connections with the West, that he was in a meeting with a Western foundation when he heard about Babar's murder, and that he immediately went to the hospital.

What follows is a carefully stitched-together defense. It begins with former Home Minister Mirza, the man who pointed the finger at MQM. "He was very friendly and still is friendly with Awami National Party's notorious leaders in Karachi. He would say, 'Taliban are running a parallel economy, extortion, robbery, kidnapping for ransom, arms money, drug money.' These are the

## THE MQM HAS EFFECTIVELY COURTED THE WEST, AN EDITOR SAYS, SELLING THE IDEA THAT IT IS THE LAST SECULAR STAND AGAINST EXTREMISM.

same businesses which the ANP leadership indulged into. They are partners in crime,” Subzwari says, conflating the Taliban with the ANP (a secular Pashtun party) and by implication the Pashtuns.

“One has to connect the dots. There is an ANP leadership who is notorious, who has benefited economically, commercially under the garb of politics. There was a home minister [Mirza] who is a xenophobe in his remarks against the Urdu-speaking community, when he said, at the house of the ANP chief, that the Urdu speakers, the immigrants who came from India to Pakistan, came here starved and naked. They had nothing with them. And this country has given it all to them. That was a xenophobic remark. That was a racist remark. It showed his inner bias towards us. Since the MQM are 85 percent coming from Urdu-speaking background, we took it very seriously.”

In the next breath, Subzwari brings up the extrajudicial killings of MQM in the 1990s. Then there’s the problem of an MQM motive. “MQM wants to eliminate Pashtuns. Oh really? Now there are hundreds of Pashtun journalists operating in Karachi. For an educated Pashtun, MQM is the only hope and largest representative in Karachi. ... We are the only liberal party in Pakistan. The others represent ethnicity or family politics.” So the MQM had no motive, he says. “Wali Khan Babar wasn’t even covering a political beat; his was the civic beat and culture,” Subzwari claims, although that wasn’t true. He quickly adds, “On that fateful day, yes, he was used as a crime reporter where the ANP party and PPP were fighting over extortion money.” Actually, the MQM were heavily involved in that turf war, too.

Subzwari was careful to end our meeting with a reminder to me of the MQM’s liberal values. “MQM is the only party to raise concerns about the murders of Ahmadis in Lahore. MQM is the only party which said Talibanization is going on in Karachi. I asked for repatriation and a check on mass migration of Pashtuns from Swat and what happened? Osama bin Laden’s widow was in Karachi. Khalid Sheikh Mohammad was here. How many Pashtun extremists are here?” What is revealed in Subzwari’s speech is the psychology behind the MQM’s philosophy; party leaders harbor an underlying belief that unless they are the toughest guys on the block, they will be wiped out by demographics if not turf wars. They have positioned themselves as the defenders of women and minorities, and as a bulwark against jihadis. It was a dazzling, speedy performance. There was truth here and there. But he never really addressed the fact that the suspects belong to the MQM

or that the witnesses who accused the MQM have been murdered. Subzwari had his eye on his watch. The British high commissioner was on his way.

The MQM has brilliantly and effectively courted the West. “They have managed to sell the idea to Western embassies that they are the last secular stand against extremism,” a prominent newspaper editor said. “At the worst times, when major crackdowns were happening, the militants got visas to Britain and the U.S.”

“Westerners don’t want to discuss the ANP-MQM turf war,” the editor went on to say. “The Pashtuns have come to Karachi. The shanty towns multiplied and that’s where the turf wars have accelerated. Taliban have found refuge in those ghettos and it’s impossible for police to go in there. The Americans want violent Islam to be taken out by violent secularists and if human rights are violated, so what.”

Ahmed Rashid, author of *Taliban* and *Descent Into Chaos*, and a CPJ board member, said “there’s some kind of treaty between the MQM and the British government. Pakistanis are amazed and upset at the way the MQM and its leaders are tolerated in Britain when they’ve been involved in so much of the killing in Karachi over the years.” Muhammad Khan Buriro, the original prosecutor in the Babar case, put it this way: “Canada labeled them a terrorist organization. If a commonwealth country calls them a terrorist organization, why does Britain differ? Because the MQM promised to secure the British infrastructure in Pakistan. In any riots the British organizations, whether BP or others, will not be affected.” Even if this is an exaggerated claim, it is a widely held perception in Pakistan.

The British government does little to dispel the notion that it condones the MQM’s behavior. When I mentioned that Pakistanis believe the British have a sort of pact with the MQM, that they have given protection to men accused of running a militia in Karachi, embassy spokesman Jonathan Williams said the British engage with the MQM because it is a democratically elected party. As far as particular cases, such as MQM leader Hussain’s receiving asylum or an extended visa in England, Williams said, “We can’t comment on individual cases of asylum or visas in particular.” He apologized for what he called the limited nature of his reply.

**T**oday the MQM is on the demographic defensive, and that is in part why the last few years have been filled with violence. According to a 1998 government census, Muhajirs made up 48 percent of the population of Karachi while Pashtuns





Rehman Malik, the former interior minister, speaks to reporters.  
REUTERS/ATHAR HUSSAIN

constituted about 11 percent. Since the earthquake in 2005 and the continuing Pakistani army operations in the tribal areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pashtuns have migrated in huge numbers to Karachi and shifted the balance. Estimates say the Pashtuns now make up more than 20 percent of the population.

The hundreds of killings recorded each year in Karachi are not random. The ANP was founded in 1986 on the nonviolent principles of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Pashtun leader who lived from 1890 to 1988 and led a movement against the British and then the Pakistani government. But now ANP-Karachi is adopting MQM tactics and has created a militant wing. It has made alliances with a splinter MQM faction—the MQM Haqiqi, or real MQM—and with the People’s Aman Committee, a Baluch organization. The factionalization, splinter groups, and temporary alliances are mind-boggling and have turned parts of Karachi into bloody ganglands. According to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 972 people were victims of targeted killings in just the first half of 2012.

“The local leaders of ANP promoted more violent and mafia-friendly leaders, less political,” said a news manager. “We will see more violence in Karachi and more pressure will come on the media.” Recently, he said, he was shouting in the newsroom because his journalists were not wearing bullet-resistant jackets. Reporters going home from riots in Lyari were stopped by MQM on one side and ANP on the other. “This is serious. If word goes down to workers that journalists can be targeted, anyone can shoot.”

The ANP, like the MQM, has resorted to cable-cutting as well. Sometimes the cable wars look like kids fighting over a toy in a playground. When Shahi

Syed, the provincial head of the ANP, became senator and arrived back in Karachi, he expected Geo TV to give him full-time coverage. The ANP, after all, was announcing an alliance with MQM-Haqiqi. But there was a cricket final between Bangladesh and Pakistan, and Geo went with the program that would bring in more viewers: cricket. The next day, threats rained on Geo TV. The ANP cut the station’s cables, and burned trucks carrying the newspapers of its parent company, the Jang Group. Geo called ANP leaders, who came to the station’s offices with a message. “They told us, ‘We know your children go to school. Everyone goes to and from neighborhoods, and no one wants to become a Wali Khan Babar. But in this city, these things happen.’ It was a direct threat,” recalled one journalist. ANP officials did not respond to requests for comment.

That’s why everyone in Karachi will tell you, there is a method to the violence. It’s not random. If you kill your rivals in an ethnically diverse neighborhood, they leave, you win the elections, and you reap more extortion money. And this, one managing editor speculated, may have been what killed Wali Khan Babar. “My own feeling is that the MQM was thinking that if a Pashtun becomes so popular as a journalist in Karachi, it gives a face and voice to the Pashtuns in Karachi, an equal representation.” Another prominent journalist put it: “The newsrooms are heavily pro-MQM, and he was one of the few who clearly belonged to an emerging ethnic group. That could be enough.”

Pakistan’s leaders could stop the violence if they chose, a Karachi editor said, but political calculations have nearly always trumped their obligation to bring peace to streets. The ANP, the PPP, and the MQM were coalition partners under the outgoing government. So, the editor said, “if police arrested the MQM, the other Islamabad”—meaning Zardari’s men—“would call and say, ‘Release them.’”

The government has not only been beholden to coalition partners, it has counted on them to carry out its dirty tricks. In January 2012, Zardari’s government looked as if it might collapse over Memogate. Husain Haqqani, the country’s ambassador to the United States, had sent a memorandum to Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, asking for help to oust the Pakistani Chief of Army Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and the ISI director general at the time, Ahmad Shuja Pasha. The army assumed Zardari was behind it.

The Jang Group, including Geo and *The News*, was eviscerating Zardari. Mohammad Malick, former editor

## SAYS ONE JOURNALIST: 'NO ONE IS BIG ENOUGH TO NOT BE KNOCKED OFF. UNTIL SOMEONE IS HELD ACCOUNTABLE, IT WON'T STOP.'

of *The News* and a well-known TV personality, told me that a sitting minister whom he would not name offered him 30 million rupees (about US\$300,000) to stop bashing the government. "Then they started threatening me, telling me I was driving very fast and when you drive fast accidents happen. I started seeing white Corollas in my neighborhood," he said, referring to the signature intelligence agency-issued cars. "I had an intelligence friend put my phone on surveillance. ... A senator close to the president started getting friendly with me, inviting me to places outside the city. I said it doesn't make sense—the road is not safe." His intelligence source relayed that there were discussions to "fix" Malick, which would mean killing him. "In the meantime, civilian intelligence were making themselves visible chasing my car, my wife's car. My kids were studying in Lahore, and there was suspicious stuff going on. Friendly civilians in government told me, 'Get out and get out now.'"

Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman, chief executive of the Jang Group, arranged to have Malick flown to Dubai. "But it's a funny government," said Malick, recalling a conversation with the former interior minister, Rehman Malik. "He called and said, 'I'm sending four frontier constables to you.' And I said, 'Just call off the people you launched on me.'"

The traditional harassment of journalists by government institutions has evolved into something more personal, Malick said. "What's happening is the line between the state and individuals has been smashed. Only on the army side is it institutional harassment—MI [Military Intelligence] or ISI institutional reaction. On the civilian side, it's state functionaries using state resources and their clout to threaten you. It's like a mafia state. Your only recourse is court, and courts are defiant. The media is way more powerful." And, therefore, more dangerous.

**E**ven before the May 2011 murder of *Asia Times Online* reporter Saleem Shahzad—a landmark killing widely believed to be the work of ISI agents—it was apparent that investigative journalism in Pakistan had become a game of Russian roulette. Journalists are squeezed on every side, threatened by the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, the ISI, the MQM, Zardari loyalists, and a host of other state and non-state militants. Yet in the decade since Musharraf released the state's grip on broadcast media, journalism in Pakistan has never been more vibrant. Today there are some 90 TV stations and more than 100 radio stations. "The days when papers were scared of taking on the army as an institution are gone," said Malick. "But we can't

take a stand against individuals because we have no institutional support. No one is big enough to not be knocked off. Until someone is held accountable for killing a journalist, it won't stop."

Wali Khan Babar's murder provoked outrage at the Karachi Press Club. Journalists for a time banded together, demanding government action. But once a case goes to court, the family is usually the one left to pursue it. As the journalist Najam Sethi explained, police have no forensic expertise and are under no internal pressure to pursue such cases. "If Zardari hadn't pursued Benazir Bhutto's case with the full force of a federal investigation agency and if Musharraf hadn't been named as the accused, it would not have made it to the court stage," he said. To date, the journalists union has not taken it upon itself to be the plaintiff in court on behalf of a fellow journalist. Babar's brother is still pursuing the case in court and has testified before the judge.

I asked the journalists at the Karachi Press Club about the Babar investigation. They smiled and shifted in their chairs. "Everyone points a finger at the MQM, but the prosecutors and judges are also under threat," said one. "Ten lawyers were killed in the last two months following sectarian killings. And actually the judge and prosecutor are under threat, and the previous prosecutors fled to the U.S."

I eventually tracked down those two prosecutors in Texas, where they were keeping such a low profile that they barely had access to the Internet. They fled Karachi in December 2011 and flew to Houston, where they had friends. Ten days after their arrival, a Pakistani attorney who worked for the "agencies" turned up in Houston inquiring about them. The prosecutors panicked, convinced the lawyer was after them, and called a distant friend in a small town. "We said, 'Please, for the sake of God, take us in. We can't trust anyone,'" Muhammad Khan Buriro, one of the prosecutors, told me.

The prosecutors had worked very closely with the press in Karachi. This was, after all, the new civilian-led Pakistan and there was faith in the idea of transparency. Their experience in Karachi explains much of how justice works in Pakistan, and what must be done to chip away at impunity. Here is their story.

Born and raised in Sindh in the 1980s, Buriro and fellow prosecutor Mobashir Mirza joined the PPP student wing at university during the turbulent anti-Zia days and never left the party. In 2007, under Musharraf, they traveled with ousted Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry as the lawyers' movement to restore him swept across the country. When the PPP



## THE PROSECUTORS WORKED IN PITIFUL OFFICES WITH NO COMPUTERS, NO PHONES, NOT EVEN LIGHT BULBS, AND CERTAINLY NO PROTECTION.

won elections in the wake of Benazir Bhutto's assassination, the two were appointed prosecutors in the anti-terrorism court in Karachi.

Immediately they faced some of the toughest cases, prosecuting Islamic terrorists who taunted them in court: "Don't you care about your life?" "You want to see your families dead?" They pleaded with the government for more protection. They worked in pitiful offices with no copy machines, no computers, no phones, not even light bulbs, and certainly no protection. In 2010 they brought *Time* magazine to their rundown offices and explained that the government was obviously more interested in fighting terrorism through military means—and often through extrajudicial killings—than through the courts.

Nevertheless, they managed to prosecute many cases and, perhaps as important, to cultivate a transparent relationship with the Karachi press corps. "We invited all the journalists to the anti-terrorism court along with their cameras. Before us, journalists were prohibited, but we were political activists for the restoration of democracy as well as the judiciary," Buriro told me when I met them in New York.

The prosecutors were put to the test in 2011 with the highly publicized murder trial of six members of the Pakistan Rangers, a paramilitary security force overseen by the Interior Ministry. It was, perhaps, the prosecutors' most successful case, but it was one that had severe consequences for their future. On June 8, 2011, just a month after the U.S. raid in Abbottabad that killed Osama bin Laden, six Rangers in Karachi were captured on video shooting Syed Sarfaraz Shah, an unarmed civilian, at close range as he pleaded for his life in a public park named after Benazir Bhutto in the Clifton neighborhood. The video shows a civilian dragging Shah in front of the Rangers who then shoot him. It shows them all standing around as Shah begs for help, bleeding into unconsciousness. Shah later died of his wounds.

The video was broadcast on Pakistani television stations and went viral, causing an outcry throughout Pakistan. Chief Justice Chaudhry said he couldn't sleep. He called the director general of the Rangers and the inspector general of police and removed them from their posts. "They were reluctant to register the case against the Rangers," Buriro said. Interior Minister Malik, whose ministry oversaw the Rangers, issued a quick statement defending the men and saying that the young Shah had been armed with a pistol and was caught trying to rob someone.

The case nevertheless was transferred from the

High Court to the anti-terrorism court, and the prosecutor general assigned it to Buriro and Mirza. By then the Karachi press corps had taken to the streets to demand justice because Shah was the brother of a colleague, Samaa TV crime reporter Syed Salik Shah. What's more, the man who caught the episode on video was also a journalist, Abdul Salam Soomro, a cameraman for Awaz Television. He was now under threat and being pressured to pronounce his video a fake. Forced to leave Awaz, he went into hiding, moving from one house to the next.

At that moment, Imtiaz Faran, the president of the Karachi Press Club, invited the two prosecutors to discuss the case. "The journalists were convinced they'd never get justice from the court, that the prosecutors could never stand against the version of events the government was presenting," Buriro recalled. "They told us if we did this in the courts we would face dire consequences."

Here is Buriro's version of what happened: "Syed Salik Shah was working as a crime reporter for Samaa TV, exposing illegal activities of the police and Rangers. All these parks have a certain area where you park your car." As Karachiites will tell you, the car parks are divided among various extortionists—including Rangers and political parties—who make money charging fees. "Salik was trying to investigate and report that. His brother, Syed Sarfaraz Shah, happened to go to the park in the evening when an agent of the Rangers was collecting these illegal parking fees. When Shah interfered with the agent—asking him, why are you taking illegal fees?—a dispute erupted and the agent called over the Rangers." In Shah's pocket, they found the business card of his journalist brother, the prosecutor said.

The Rangers shot Shah without warning, Buriro said, and to cover their tracks filed what is known as a First Information Report. The report stated that the Rangers encountered Shah "committing dacoity"—stealing—"and possessing illicit arms without any license or authority."

A Joint Investigation Team, composed of civilian and military intelligence bodies, concluded in its report that the Rangers were innocent, that Shah was a thief, and that the case should be referred back to the regular courts. "The investigating officer of the case pressured me in the presence of journalists to submit the same in court, but I vehemently opposed the application in open court and it was dismissed," Buriro said. The director inspector general, accompanied by an entourage of senior police officials, soon arrived at the prosecutor's office to press the demand. "Why don't you submit this report



## POLICE OFFICERS ARE AFRAID. THOSE WHO WANT TO DO THEIR JOBS ARE THWARTED OR, AS IN THE BABAR CASE, KILLED.

to the court?’ Buriro recalled the official as shouting. “I replied: ‘I will never submit this report because I have to follow the law. I am not your subordinate. This report has been made to save the Rangers in this case.’” The director inspector general “then threatened the court reporters from *Dunya TV* and *Dawn*. And he told me, ‘You will no longer be in your position. You are going against the government and the agencies so be careful or you will face dire consequences in future.’”

Buriro decided just to do his job. He examined 20 witnesses including Soomro, who had filmed the murder. Buriro produced the video in open court. He cross-examined the defendants’ witness, an ISI colonel. The prosecutors withstood anonymous phone threats; they turned down bribes to let the case return to the regular courts, where it would fade away. The security apparatus was especially furious that uniformed men were being tried in the anti-terrorism court. “During the process of the case I was threatened by the naval agencies. I was threatened by the ISI,” Buriro said. The prosecutors were excoriated for not damaging evidence in the case as instructed.

The year 2011 was a bad one for military officials. They’d taken a blow not only from the United States but also from the Pakistani public, their prowess put in question by a foreign army’s ability to invade undetected and kill Osama bin Laden. It was too much in the wake of Abbottabad to have uniformed officers on trial before civilian prosecutors affiliated with the PPP. It was a matter of *ghairat*—honor.

Despite the intimidation, the ISI threats, and Interior Minister Malik’s declarations of the Rangers’ innocence, the prosecutors won the case. The judge sentenced one Ranger to death, and the others, including the civilian who had dragged Shah before the Rangers, to life in prison. That’s when the government and the agencies ratcheted up the pressure on Buriro and Mirza.

“The army and agency believe any discussion of anti-terrorism should be with them, not the civilian government,” Ayesha Haroon, former editor of *The News*, said in an interview before her death in 2013. “It’s the strength of civilian government that we had public prosecutors who with a free media could take cases like the Rangers and support them to go forward. But then we have the pushback that comes from the army and establishment. There’s always this battle, but slowly it is moving in the right direction. They managed to prosecute the Rangers.”

The trial concluded on August 12, 2011. The defense appealed. And on August 17, Buriro and Mirza flew to

the United States with the permission of the Pakistani government. As prosecutors in the anti-terrorism court, they’d been selected by the U.S. Consulate in Karachi to attend a program convened by the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies at the Newport, R.I., naval station. The course fell under the rubric of the Kerry-Lugar Act’s training and capacity-building; the Pakistanis sent military and intelligence officers as well. Even in the United States, Buriro said, he came under pressure from Pakistani military officers not to give a briefing on the Rangers case because it would “cause defamation and seriously damage the reputation of Pakistan.” He went ahead with the briefing anyway.

Much of the physical and psychological intimidation of journalists and judicial officials is precipitated by the perception that they are either working with the United States against Pakistan’s interests or exposing the ISI-jihadi networks. The experience of Buriro and Mirza was no exception. On the prosecutors’ return to Karachi, the agencies began hounding them. “In the Karachi bar association we were interrogated by the ISI officers many times: ‘Why did we go to America for training? What type of training? Why did we give a briefing on the Rangers case in America? Why were you invited? All others were uniformed persons from other countries,’” Buriro said.

Buriro and Mirza were trouble for the army and the intelligence. They understood the relationship between the jihadis and the agencies, and they knew how uninterested the establishment was in prosecuting terrorists.

“The agencies are not interested in convictions of extremist guys,” Buriro said.

Every week, the prosecutors would get a visit from ISI and military intelligence officers to discuss the terrorism cases, to find out how many were being tried, how many pending. “And always they’d say, ‘Why are you going after good Muslims?’ or ‘What is the case against [Lashkar-e-Janghvi leader] Akram Lahori? He is working for Islam. Why are you working against him?’ We replied that the government gave us the case. *They* should withdraw it.”

**T**he MQM behaves with a little more subtlety but not much. As soon as Buriro and Mirza returned to Karachi, they began work on the Wali Khan Babar case.

Buriro believes that Babar’s reporting got him in trouble—coverage of extortion, targeted killings, electricity theft, land-grabbing, riots. “In Gulestan-e-Jauhar area, for example, which is dominated by the MQM, people were using electricity without



## CLERKS IN THE ANTI-TERRORISM COURT WARNED THEM: 'PLEASE DON'T TOUCH THE CASE IF YOU WANT TO STAY ALIVE!'

meters, not paying the electric company, and MQM was charging the fee and collecting the money on their own behalf," Buriro said. "When this story was reported and was aired, the MQM threatened Wali Khan Babar. In his last days he reported on the feud in Pehlwan Goth over land-grabbing between MQM and PPP. The investigation revealed that the MQM had tried to murder Wali Khan several times."

As soon as Buriro inherited the case, he began getting anonymous threatening phone calls. Still, he studied the case thoroughly. "I concluded that the police did not investigate the case properly. If an offender or defendant gives a statement before the police in an interrogation, that statement is not admissible before the court of law. It has to be before a judicial magistrate. The police had violated and damaged the entire case."

In part, Buriro doesn't blame them. The police officers are afraid. Those who took part in the crackdown against the MQM in the 1990s have almost all been murdered in retaliation. As interior minister, Rehman Malik frequently visited MQM headquarters and publicly admired Altaf Hussain. The message inevitably trickles down to the entire police body. Those who want to do their jobs are thwarted or, as in the case of the constables investigating Babar's case, killed.

Buriro nevertheless called the investigating officer to find out why he'd left so many legal lacunae in the case. "It's very weak," Buriro said. "All the [officers] investigating terrorism are less educated, less qualified, not knowing the law well." The obstacles facing these officers are twofold. On one hand are practical problems such as inadequate criminal justice training, insufficient funding for forensics, deficient security. And then there are the power politics: The civilian government gets its arm twisted by the groups with which it has formed alliances, like the religious parties, which back the jihadis, or the MQM, which has its own militant wing.

"When I inquired to the investigating officer about the fate of the case, he was reluctant to reply properly. So off the record, he told me, 'I'm helpless,'" Buriro said. "We were now a threat because we the prosecutors, according to the anti-terrorism act, are empowered to call anyone as a witness whom we deem fit and proper. According to the anti-terrorism court, if any [officer] is conducting defective investigations, he is liable to be convicted by the court."

Ironically, the prosecutors were warned of the danger they were facing by MQM "informants"—the clerks in their own anti-terrorism court. "The clerks told us, 'Please don't touch the case if you want to stay alive. For the sake of God, if you want to see your families don't

touch this case. Every court copy is sent to Nine Zero,'" Buriro recalled. The judges and prosecutors understand that everything going on in the courts is reported to the MQM. It's another form of intimidation. The institutional protection for the MQM goes right to the top. As one human rights lawyer told me: "The ISI tacitly supports the MQM. Once Wali Khan was murdered, the MQM has its links with the ISI. MQM has the whole police in their hands. It's infiltrated institutions in Karachi. They have a kind of power to instill fear. Those who've been accused of this murder will be tried and acquitted, saying there's not sufficient evidence."

Which may be one of the many reasons Buriro and Mirza were fired just a few weeks after their return from the United States. "When we were removed, we approached the prosecutor general of Sindh to find out why we were condemned unheard, why we were sacked without any justification," Buriro told me. "He told us, 'Keep your mouths mum. It is better for you.'" The agencies were not only threatening Buriro and Mirza but their families as well. Their children were interrogated "to exert mental stress on us," Buriro recalled. The prosecutors kept looking to the judicial system for protection, but it was in vain. As the two prepared to file an appeal with the bar association, their superiors told them to drop the matter. With little left to lose, Buriro, Mirza, and colleagues called a news conference. They spoke out against the agencies and blamed the PPP government for failing to protect its own.

This seemed to make matters worse. The ISI ordered them to appear at the offices of the head of Sindh intelligence at noon on December 22, 2011. The prosecutors were nervous and sought advice from their journalist friends. "They told us, 'They will try to make you their own agent. If you refuse, they will harm you. So many people have been murdered mysteriously in Pakistan, so many have been taken hostage by agencies.' They told us to leave the country immediately," Buriro said.

At 6 a.m. on December 22, they left Karachi and headed for the United States. Today there is a new prosecutor in the Wali Khan Babar case—and a new murder. On November 11, 2012, two gunmen aboard a motorcycle killed Haider Ali, the only remaining eyewitness in the case, near his home in the Soldier Bazaar area of Karachi. He was meant to testify in court two days later. He was also meant to be underground and protected. Abdul Maroof, the new prosecutor, complained to journalists that police had not provided proper protection and that the criminal networks were so powerful they had no problem eliminating a witness days before his testimony. ■

## Verbatim: Threats, Promises, and Fears

“No half-hearted police measures or words of consolation from the highest offices in the land will suffice in the aftermath of the brutal treatment meted out to journalist Umar Cheema of *The News*.”

—*Editorial in the newspaper Dawn condemning the September 2010 abduction and beating of Cheema. Intelligence agents were suspected in the attack. No arrests were made.*

“This recurring pattern of death is a stark negation of the most basic rights that the state is under an obligation to protect. ... The task of the law enforcement agencies must be more than merely delivering dead bodies and injured to hospitals and claiming to be on high security alerts after the fact.”

—*The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in a January 2011 statement condemning the murder of reporter Wali Khan Babar and a spree of targeted killings in Karachi.*

“I take Adnan’s following statement as MURDER threat. He said: ‘Saleem I must give you a favor. We have recently arrested a terrorist and have recovered lot of data, diaries and other material during the interrogation. He has a hit list with him. If I find your name in the list I will let you know.’”

—*Reporter Saleem Shahzad in an October 2010 email to his editor, documenting a meeting with Rear Adm. Adnan Nazir at ISI offices. Shahzad asked his editor to keep the note “as record if something happens to me in the future.”*

“The failure of this probe to identify the culprits does, in all seriousness, raise a big question about our justice system’s ability to resolve such ‘mysterious’ incidents even in the future.”

—*The report of the official commission of inquiry into the May 2011 murder of Saleem Shahzad.*

“President Zardari must make it a priority to ensure that Pakistan’s probing press is not forced to refrain from sensitive coverage in order to stay alive.”

—*CPJ Chairman Paul Steiger, after a May 2011 meeting with the president. In the meeting, Zardari pledged to reverse the country’s record of impunity.*

“The protection of journalists is in my mandate.”

—*Zardari, speaking to the CPJ delegation in May 2011.*

“You want to be a hero? We’ll make you a hero. We’re going to make an example of you.”

—*Waqar Kiani, correspondent for the U.K.’s Guardian, recounting the words of assailants who beat him for 15 hours in June 2011. Kiani had recently reported on cases of abduction and torture by men suspected of being intelligence agents.*

“What should I do? Not report what I know just to stay safe?”

—*A Pakistani journalist, in an interview with CPJ for an article published in October 2011. The journalist, who spoke on condition of anonymity, eventually fled the country.*

“Our announcement from today is that all reporters of Voice of America are our targets and should resign. Otherwise we will kill them.”

—*Taliban spokesman Mukarram Khurasani to Bloomberg News after the January 2012 murder of VOA reporter Mukarram Khan Aatif.*

“In the last 10 years, Pakistani journalists have been observing the death anniversary of a murdered colleague almost every month.”

—*Prominent journalist Mazhar Abbas, in a January 2012 commentary in The News on the anniversary of the Babar murder.*

“Pakistan has become a country where the corrupt enjoy immunity and killers enjoy impunity.”

—*Umar Cheema writing for the CPJ Blog in April 2012 after Pakistan opposed a UNESCO plan to combat impunity in journalist murders.*

“All murder is a tragedy but when journalists are killed, public debate loses a voice that can provide an important contribution to democracy. It is essential that governments do all they can to ensure safe conditions for journalists to carry out their work.”

—*Irina Bokova, director-general of UNESCO, in a December 2012 statement condemning the killing of journalist Saqib Khan in Karachi.*



## A Death in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

On the evening of January 17, 2012, a year and four days after Geo TV reporter Wali Khan Babar was gunned down on a busy street in Karachi, Mukarram Khan Aatif, a senior journalist in the tribal region of Pakistan, was offering evening prayers at a mosque near his home in Shabqadar. Two men approached and fired three times, shooting him in the chest and head. One of the bullets passed through Aatif and injured the imam as well. Aatif was pronounced dead at the hospital that night.

Almost immediately Ihsanullah Ihsan, spokesman for Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, which is based in the tribal regions, called journalists in Peshawar to say that Aatif had been told to stop propagandizing against the TTP in foreign media and to start including the group's perspective in his stories. Aatif had ignored the demands, he said, so the TTP killed him. Ihsan warned that the TTP had named several other journalists to its hit list—and if they didn't shape up, they would also see their ends.

The president and the prime minister condemned the killing and offered their condolences to the family. Journalists in the tribal areas were enraged, not just that their friend and colleague was dead, but that the Taliban could kill a journalist who was so fair, and always in contact with them. “We often laughed with Mukarram that he was like a spokesman of the Taliban,” said Shams Momand, a close friend from Mohmand Agency who works for Samaa TV. “He was so popular among the locals and the Taliban—so why would they claim the killing?”

A teacher, poet, and social activist in his mid-40s, Aatif was one of the most senior journalists in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA, and he was a role model for colleagues. Aatif began his career some 20 years earlier, writing reports from the tribal areas for an Urdu-language daily and founding



Protesters denounce the killing of Mukarram Khan Aatif.  
AP/MOHAMMAD SAJJAD

a literary monthly. When Deewa Radio, the Pashto-language service of the U.S. government-funded Voice of America, began broadcasting in 2006, Aatif became its local correspondent.

Aatif was involved in the local literary organization and developed a friendship with a fellow poet, Omar Khalid, a young man who would become head of the TTP in Mohmand. They were friends up until the day Aatif was killed. They discussed poetry and, inevitably, Taliban wrath over Aatif's radio reports. Deewa Radio and Radio Mashaal, the Pashto service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, are followed closely in the tribal areas because their programs are among the few devoted to local problems. That importance explains why journalists working at Deewa and Mashaal are trapped in a vise, squeezed by the TTP, the army, and their editors in Washington or Europe. The Taliban object to being called “terrorists,” and protest that their version of events is rarely aired.

“Mukarram recorded the voices and cries of the families of the Frontier Constables who were targeted in a suicide attack, and that was the main reason for the Taliban's unhappiness with him,” said Ibrahim Shinwari, who also reports for VOA and has come under threat numerous times himself. Shinwari recalled

## BY THE TIME U.S. AIRCRAFT STRUCK OUTPOSTS AT SALALA, KILLING 24 PAKISTANI SOLDIERS, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE ABYSMAL.

that the Taliban repeatedly warned Aatif that “VOA is in fact the voice of the Americans, and the voice of the militants is not acceptable to VOA.” He added: “Mukarram discussed with me the problem that the militants wanted to give their version of an incident. Yet when the reports were aired on the radio, their version was missing.”

Officially, there is no mystery to Aatif’s death. He is another casualty of the war on terror, Taliban summary executions, and U.S. programs that can put at risk the local people associated with them. But unofficially, many I spoke with do not believe Aatif was killed on the orders of the Taliban or for the publicly stated reasons.

**I**n November 2011, U.S. aircraft struck two Pakistani outposts at Salala, near the border with Afghanistan, killing 24 Pakistani soldiers. Relations between the United States and Pakistan were already abysmal. On January 27, 2011, Raymond Davis, a U.S. contractor who worked for the CIA, gunned down two Pakistani agents on the busy streets of Lahore, claiming he acted in self-defense. The police arrested him and a diplomatic row erupted between the two governments. Eventually the Americans paid blood money to the families, and the Pakistanis released Davis. In the wake of the affair, the ISI and the army tried to bring down Husain Haqqani, then the Pakistani ambassador to the United States, for, among other things, issuing so many visas to U.S. citizens who were part of a vast network involved in the drone program and, it turned out, the operation targeting Osama bin Laden. In May 2011, the United States launched its raid on Abbottabad, not only killing bin Laden, but striking a blow to the honor and pride of the Pakistani Army. Local journalists lost fear and respect for the military.

In late May 2011, militants connected to Al-Qaeda attacked the Mehran naval air base in Karachi, once again humiliating the military. It was time for the intelligence agencies to strike back. Saleem Shahzad, a Pakistani reporter for *Asia Times Online* who covered the Taliban more closely than any other journalist in the region, and who reported on Al-Qaeda infiltration of the Pakistani Navy, went missing. He was

found dead a few days later, his body showing signs of torture.

In September 2011, Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, shocked both the United States and Pakistan with his blunt farewell testimony to Congress, declaring that the insurgent Haqqani network in Afghanistan was, in essence, a militia sponsored by Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence. He also told reporters that Shahzad had been killed on orders of Pakistani Army Chief Ashfaq Kayani and the ISI’s director general at the time, Shuja Pasha. A Pentagon official and close aide to Mullen told me, “What you saw on September 20 was his own bitterness and disappointment over Pakistan’s refusal to change the way they do business.”

The summer had seen the most lethal and brazen attacks emanating from Pakistan. There was the Haqqani network’s attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul. There was the Wardak truck bomb that wounded 77 American soldiers on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks. “That infuriated him,” the Mullen aide said. “We told the Pakistanis that a truck bomb was coming our way, and they pledged to do something about it and didn’t. And then the killing of Shahzad. He was furious, pounding his desk. He called out the ISI and government for sanctioning the killing. At the end he felt betrayed by General Kayani and the Pakistani military establishment.”

Then, with relations between the two countries at a low, came Salala and the U.S. killing of Pakistani soldiers. The Pakistanis demanded an apology and cut off supply routes for NATO forces. The U.S. military conducted an investigation, although the Pakistanis refused to cooperate and disputed the findings. After a seven-month standoff, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton expressed regret in a statement that said “mistakes” had led to the attack.

Mukarram Khan Aatif filed early reports on the Salala attack for Deewa Radio and took part in what are called two-ways, which are live exchanges with the station’s studio journalists. Local residents had told Aatif there was a Taliban hideout just two kilometers from the Pakistani checkpoints, said a tribal area journalist, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The Taliban’s



## IN MOHMAND, A TALIBAN SPOKESMAN TOLD LOCAL JOURNALISTS THAT THE ORDER TO KILL AATIF CAME FROM 'ABOVE.'

supposed proximity to the army—"under their noses," as the journalist put it—was highly sensitive information because it could have provided some justification for the U.S. attack. Soon after, the journalist said, Aatif began receiving threats from the Pakistani Army, security agencies, and the Taliban, all angered by what had aired. Aatif's relatives and friends in Mohmand confirmed that he received threats from militants and security officials immediately after the Deewa reports were broadcast.

No archive of Aatif's reports on Salala is available, according to Deewa. Nafees Takar, chief of the Deewa service, said reports typically expire within 24 hours and that no reports are archived for more than a month. Spozhmai Maiwandi, director of VOA's South Asia division, said Aatif's Salala reports explained the geography of the area but did not mention a Taliban presence. Deewa officials did not respond to CPJ's repeated queries seeking information on what was said by the station's studio journalists during their live two-way exchanges with Aatif.

Known as a careful and savvy reporter, Aatif might never have intended to mention the proximity of the Taliban in his Deewa reports. But the live two-way exchanges are not always in the control of the field reporter. Studio journalists for U.S.-backed news agencies, who are conducting the two-ways from the safety of their offices, often veer into sensitive material or ask provocative questions that can pose trouble for those working in the field, according to a number of reporters.

Over the course of several interviews with different sources, including an official with the U.S. National Security Council, I was told a similar version of what may have led to Aatif's murder. These sources not only linked Aatif's murder to the Salala reports, they said the Taliban had not acted on their own.

"The claim of his death was accepted by militants," said the tribal area journalist, "but according to my information, the ISI were involved in his death." When I asked him why the Taliban took responsibility, he said, "Saleem Shahzad was killed by the agency. Everyone knows it, and the agency took the blame. It might be the reason that, for the first time, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the killing of a journalist. If they didn't, the journalists would blame the ISI and protest across the country."

He said it was uncharacteristic of the Taliban to take

responsibility for the murder of a journalist. "Before Mukarram, 11 tribal journalists were killed by unknown persons. I know the militants killed them, but they never accepted responsibility."

I asked him what he thought happened. "Everyone knows that the ISI and Taliban have close links," he said. "It's a fact. Hundreds of army men up to the rank of colonel and major are working and operating in the ranks of Taliban and have long hair and long beards. It could be an army man or agency man working in the ranks of Taliban. Or they could just tell the Taliban to do it."

Another colleague of Aatif told me that some time after the murder, a Taliban spokesman in Mohmand Agency told local journalists that the Taliban were helpless, that the order to kill Aatif came from "above."

I wrote to the Taliban with the help of a Pakistani journalist and told them the theory circulating about Aatif's death. Here, in full, is their email response:

Miss Rubin, first of all following Footsteps of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (May Allah be Pleased with him) i Invite you to embrace Islam, the religion of Peace & Prosperity and it assures you success in life and hereafter.

Now coming to your question, everyone knows that we are striving to implement Islamic Law in Pakistan & whole world. We respect Human life. We Killed Mukkaram Khan Atif and claimed responsibility for it. Reason was that he wasn't giving us any coverage while reporting claims of our enemies which is clear breach of Journalistic norms. Instead he was a part of Mission by government and always tried to prove us terrorists, which we are not. We claim that he was a Spy. We issued him warning many times. We also had and yet have reservations on Institute for whom he worked and we may Target it in Future, infect we will target any Journalists who will violate the practice of Fair and just journalism.

We believe in the Freedom of Journalism.

From:  
Ihsan-ullah-Ihsan  
Central Spokesman TTP

A journalist from the tribal areas who knows the Taliban wondered whose response this really was, and who might have dictated it. Was it the same people who gave the order to kill Aatif? But even as I asked him these questions, he said, "We all know who killed



A police officer at the gate to the Mehran naval base. Al-Qaeda's attack on the base put the military further on the defensive. REUTERS/AKHTAR SOOMRO

Mukarram, but we cannot say." Or rather they cannot say on the record.

When I asked the ISI about allegations of agency involvement in Aatif's murder, a Pakistani security official told me: "What can I say about that accusation? A person's beliefs are his personal beliefs. He can believe the Easter bunny lays eggs or that Saint Nick climbs down the chimney. But this is totally unsubstantiated." I also asked the security official about the supposed proximity of the army and Taliban bases. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, responded with his own question: "The post was there to prevent cross-border activity. Why would we allow a Taliban base right next to us?"

The obvious answer is that the Taliban have been an asset of the Pakistani security establishment for some time. The soldiers on the border are from the Frontier Corps, which is composed mainly of Pashtuns from the tribal regions. They often sympathize with the Taliban or are intimidated into helping them. Invariably they look the other way when the Taliban are crossing.

A U.S. military officer involved in the Salala attack told me that a small team of U.S. Special Forces and about 120 Afghan commandos were doing a night raid on a village in Afghanistan when they took fire from a ridgeline on the Pakistani border. The Special Forces team called in close air support that included an AC-130 gunship loaded with firepower including rounds

of bullets the size of Coke bottles. He said the Special Forces team on the ground and others back at base camp tried to find out if there were Pakistani soldiers on the border; they were told there were not. Separately, a Pakistani liaison officer working with Afghan and American counterparts was trying to find out who was shooting at the Pakistani border posts. Somehow, neither side got the right answer for about an hour and 45 minutes, until an American liaison officer who happened to be in Pakistan learned that Pakistani soldiers were under attack from an AC-130.

The U.S. military officer said that about a dozen undeclared insurgents were killed in addition to the 24 Pakistani soldiers. It's possible, he said, that if U.S. forces had information earlier about the presence of Pakistani soldiers they might not have had aircraft chase down and kill the fleeing men. He did not, however, second guess the decision to call in close air support. And he was convinced that either the insurgents were firing on U.S. forces with the Pakistani soldiers looking on, or that they were firing together.

I also spoke to a U.S. official with the National Security Council who put his own interpretation on the episode. "The Frontier Corps are all Pashtuns sympathetic to the Taliban, and they turn a blind eye to the Taliban and the U.S. guys know that. So they liberally used the rules of engagement to fire back for over an hour and a half. They followed the shooters as they tried to escape from the outpost to ensure they



## A MURDER THAT SYMBOLIZED THE EASE WITH WHICH ONE CAN KILL A JOURNALIST, AND THE IMPUNITY ENJOYED BY ANYONE WHO DOES.



The intelligence services were suspected of involvement in the May 2011 murder of reporter Saleem Shahzad. REUTERS

were killed,” he said. “Add this to the list of things that happen when you leave the army in the field for so long.”

The U.S. security official said he, too, believed that Pakistani intelligence was behind Aatif’s murder. But there is no direct evidence and, likely, there never will be. Without a formal investigation, without any judicial process, there will be no case, and no one who lives and works in the tribal region is going to come forward. What we are left with is anonymous conjecture and the experience of journalists and locals who know how things work, have a history in the region, and can compare past killings with the present ones. Everyone knows by now that the Taliban and the ISI have links, that there are “good, useful” Taliban and “bad” Taliban in the eyes of the Pakistanis. The Taliban, too, know they are expendable. Sometimes they dance carefully with their ISI handlers, and sometimes they rebel. They can be hired to kill for next to nothing, so no one will ever know who gave the trigger order. But the red line is clear: Do not report on the links between the Pakistani military, ISI, and their assets. It’s against the perceived national interest.

There is a pattern to the intimidation of journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and it is a microcosm of what goes on around the country. Journalists have sources among the army, the agency, the militants, and at any moment they can wander too deeply into the maze of “security.”

“The ISI has so many people within the press corps, within the media who work with them, who are on their payroll,” said a journalist from the tribal areas who left the country under threat. “In most of the cases it’s just to make contacts, and both sides help each other. Once, a friend of mine came over to my house with an ISI guy who had moved to the analysis wing. I asked him for contacts in the media wing and after some time he asked if I expected money if he introduces me to media people. I said, no, I just needed contacts. I was surprised how openly he offered me money. He said, ‘We have so many people on our payroll.’”

The journalist continued: “I was introduced to a colonel from Waziristan. Sometimes we would meet and he was helpful. He would give me a lot of general advice of what was going on in the tribal areas. But then he asked me to turn over sources to him that he wanted for his own purposes. I couldn’t do that. I gradually distanced myself from that guy and thought I don’t need what he gives me. They come closer to you and if you don’t listen to them anymore you are in trouble.”

For the press in the tribal areas, the 2009 murder of Musa Khankhel, who worked for *The News* and Geo TV, symbolizes the ease with which one can kill a journalist, and the impunity enjoyed by anyone who does. During the army’s 2009 operations against the Taliban of Swat, who had taken over the region, Khankhel arrived in Islamabad complaining to his bosses at Geo that the army was punishing him for his reports by barring him from operations and news conferences. Geo had to take him off the air, and Khankhel retaliated by publishing screeds against the army in other outlets. He was then kidnapped and beaten.

“He came to me and said, ‘Record my statement,’” recalled Hamid Mir, who was Khankhel’s supervisor at the time. Mir published Khankhel’s statement in his column in *The News*. The head of the internal wing of the ISI assured Mir nothing would happen to Khankhel, but a few days later Khankhel called from Swat. “He told me the ISI would kill him and blame the Taliban,” Mir said. “Then he called me again and said, ‘They’ve decided to assassinate someone from Geo.’ I



## FROM THE MILITARY'S PERSPECTIVE, WHY WOULD COMMANDERS WANT REAL REPORTING TO EMERGE DURING THEIR OPERATION IN SWAT?

told him not to leave the hotel. I called the managing director of Geo in Karachi. An hour later [Khankhel] was killed with 32 bullets. The message? 'Don't bad-mouth us.'"

When I asked the Pakistani security official about Mir's accusations, he said, "Let him interpret what he wants to. But to the best of my knowledge we don't indulge in that kind of activity."

Killing or threatening? I asked. "Both," he said.

I told him I was surprised to hear that, given the number of journalists who feel threatened by the ISI. He stood by the claim nevertheless, and countered that journalists listen to "reason and logic."

"When I talk to someone," he said, "I talk with reason and logic and give my point of view. You want to buy it? Fine with me. You don't want to buy it? Fine with me." He said he could not speak for everyone at the ISI. This was just how he conducted his own meetings. Then again, if you encourage a journalist to buy your point of view, and you are with the ISI, your words carry far greater implications than those of an average citizen.

Mir, who was often accused in the past of having too close ties with the ISI and militants, told me, "I used to tell colleagues, 'Don't trust the Taliban and you'll reduce the threat 50 percent. Maybe the state institutions are better.' We used to think they were on the same side as us to get rid of extremists, but that was our miscalculation," he says now. In fact, the agency's philosophy is not that different in its view of killing than that of the Taliban. As Mir told me, "Retired agency officials tell me, 'We believe that killing a human being for the protection of the larger national interest is not a bad thing.'"

**F**rom the military's point of view, why would commanders want real reporting to emerge during their operation in Swat? It would expose too much about the army, particularly the ISI's complicity in the rise of the Swat Taliban, and it would undermine their propaganda. A BBC editor told me that in 2009, the network was running FM broadcasts in Charsadda near Mohmand. "The military shut it down after the Swat operation in 2009. They told us, 'We are running a propaganda campaign in Pakistan and anything that goes against that screws up this campaign.'" Tellingly, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America do not even have transmitters or towers in Pakistan. "Even our transmitters are in Muscat," in Oman, said the BBC editor. "There's no mobile,



The security establishment was furious with Husain Haqqani, ambassador to the United States, for issuing visas to so many U.S. citizens. AP/ANJUM NAVEED

no FM, no television in FATA. Until we have a strong media run by the tribesmen there is no way out of the poverty, illiteracy, and militancy."

The killing of Musa Khankhel was not the only journalist fatality to occur during the Swat operations. In August 2009, Janullah Hashimzada, an Afghan journalist who reported for The Associated Press, CNN, Al-Arabiya, and Shamshad, a Pashto-language Afghan TV station, was shot dead in a bizarre ambush. He was on a passenger coach driving through Khyber Agency when four gunmen driving a white sedan, the standard intelligence agency vehicle, intercepted the bus. They forced the bus driver out and then walked down the aisle and shot Hashimzada in the forehead, killing him on the spot. "Janullah was a very good friend of mine," said Daud Khattak, a journalist from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who is now working for RFE/RL in Prague. "Just a few days before he was killed he interviewed the Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, and in his story he said they interviewed him in the Hyatabad area of Peshawar." In other words, Mujahid was openly living in one of the main settled cities of Pakistan. "We told him it would be a problem," Khattak said. "Zardari was on his U.S. visit at the time."



## THE ARMY WANTS THE PRESS TO REPORT THAT EVERYTHING IS OK IN THE TRIBAL AREAS, A REPORTER TELLS ME. AS WE SPOKE, AN IED WENT OFF.



A Pashtun tribesman at the site of a 2012 bombing in Jamrud, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. REUTERS/FAYAZ AZI

The consensus among many journalists is that Hashimzada was another victim of an agency killing. To them, the pattern is obvious.

When a journalist airs a fact that embarrasses the military or the intelligence apparatus, an official will visit, call, warn, and in some cases, if it happens too often, kill the individual.

When I asked the ISI about the Hashimzada murder, the security official said: “I haven’t heard any such story.”

“Which part? The killing of Janullah Hashimzada or the accusation that the ISI killed him,” I asked.

“Both,” he said. “I don’t know about this incident.”

Sometimes the offending piece of information is any information at all. Shams Momand, who works for Samaa TV, has been navigating these tricky waters for years because he, like Aatif, comes from Mohmand Agency. In 2011, the army was claiming to have swept Mohmand clean of Taliban and returned life to normal. Anyone who lived there knew the reality. The bazaars were still closed. Roads were still closed.

“So I reported that the locals face fear and their businesses and activities are banned by the Taliban,”

Momand said. “After that the army banned me from going with them. They want us to report that everything is OK.” In fact, it’s not. The evening before I met Momand, the Taliban had destroyed a school; while we spoke, he received a phone call that an IED had just gone off on a local road.

If exposing unwanted truths can be fatal, being employed by an American or Western media outlet or research institution incurs risk as well. Many journalists have stopped using their names in reports. Riaz Gul, who is based in Islamabad for Radio Mashaal, told me that in March 2012 he got a call from a TTP spokesman giving him news of an attack in Swat. When we met in Islamabad, Gul recounted the conversation. “He told me, ‘You Mashaal people should air our voices; otherwise we know how to deal with you. All you people at Mashaal became a party and are not impartial, so please cover us as you cover other people like the police and agencies. This is your duty.’ I said, ‘We are doing our job. We can’t do anything if we send our report to the head office; it’s up to them whether they like to put it on air or not.’” The Pakistani establishment knows the Taliban are putting this kind of

pressure on journalists, but they sanction it by doing nothing about it.

For most journalists, in fact, the intelligence agency's own pressure is far more sinister.

In March 2012, I met with a journalist from the tribal areas who was working for Radio Mashaal in Islamabad. He was so spooked by months of harassment by the agency that he finally quit. He seems to have caught the attention of intelligence officials not just for his affiliation with a Western radio station but also for his research papers for U.S. institutes linked to the government or military.

Shortly before I left Pakistan, I met with Safdar Dawar, president of the Tribal Union of Journalists, which plays a vital role in FATA. One of the problems is that virtually no organization is allowed in the tribal areas. "Here in Islamabad you have high court,

ministries, political parties, human rights activists, social activists. But in the tribal areas, NGOs are not allowed," Dawar said. "There's no power for human rights groups, no child labor laws, or anti-corruption, only the TUJ. But the intelligence does not like the media because then [intelligence] cannot act so freely." He quoted a saying about the tribal region: "FATA has military, militancy, and media—and sometimes the first two get together against the third."

The media do not belong to the people of the tribal areas, either. They are basically foreign-owned. The Taliban run illegal radio stations, but the government will not issue licenses to ordinary citizens for radio stations—which leads one to all kinds of conspiracy theories if you're a citizen in FATA. "There is no local media. It's banned," Dawar said. "For that, we are told, we have to change the constitution." ■

---

## For VOA Reporters, a Difficult Balance

**T**he Taliban's claim that they murdered Voice of America reporter Mukarram Khan Aatif because he failed to present their perspective in his stories was deeply troubling—if not terrifying—to the local reporters of the U.S. government-funded news agency.

Ibrahim Shinwari, a reporter with Deewa Radio, the VOA's Pashto-language service, said he has been perplexed by the broadcast agency's policies, a sentiment expressed by other local journalists. After the Aatif murder, he said, "we emailed the entire hierarchy at VOA explaining the weak position we are in. ... But they say it's against the policy of VOA to take voices that are on the wanted list or declared terrorists."

VOA managers say the policy is not so clear-cut. In response to local concerns, they followed up with a memo that outlined a more nuanced approach than the one commonly understood in the field. "We were instructed in a collective email to include Taliban or any other militant group's version if they take responsibility for a certain incident," Shinwari said.

In a statement, VOA spokesman Kyle King said, "Deewa Radio and Television, which broadcasts to Pakistan's tribal areas, has consistently asked report-

ers in the region to include claims of responsibility or other relevant statements from the Taliban or other groups, if they are important to the story. We do not air speeches and comments from extremist groups that are not germane to individual stories."

What the Taliban view as germane and what VOA views as germane is precisely where the problem lies for local journalists. After Aatif's death, VOA said it held discussions about the Taliban complaints. "These complaints were unfounded," King said. "In an effort to restate our policy, the chief of our Deewa service and the division director sent emails and spoke by telephone with our local reporters to reiterate VOA's longstanding policy on balance, and the requirement that all sides of an issue are reported, including the Taliban's. There was no softening or change in VOA policy following Mukarram's death."

The Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees VOA, posthumously awarded Aatif the David Burke Distinguished Journalism Award, which recognizes the courage, integrity, and professionalism of individuals reporting for U.S. government-sponsored entities. For those in the field, though, there is no getting around the risky business of working for a U.S. government outlet. ■



# A DEADLY DECADE: JOURNALISTS KILLED 2003-2012

- January 21, 2003 **1** Fazal Wahab, Freelance
- January 29, 2004 **2** Sajid Tanoli, *Shumal*
- February 7, 2005 **3** Allah Noor, Khyber TV
- February 7, 2005 **4** Amir Nowab, Associated Press Television News and *Frontier Post*
- May 29, 2006 **5** Munir Ahmed Sangi, Kawish Television Network (KTN)
- June 16, 2006 **6** Hayatullah Khan, Freelance
- April 28, 2007 **7** Mehboob Khan, Freelance
- June 2, 2007 **8** Noor Hakim Khan, *Daily Pakistan*
- July 3, 2007 **9** Javed Khan, *Markaz* and DM Digital TV
- October 19, 2007 **10** Muhammad Arif, ARY Television
- November 23, 2007 **11** Zubair Ahmed Mujahid, *Jang*
- February 9, 2008 **12** Chishti Mujahid, *Akbar-e-Jehan*
- February 29, 2008 **13** Siraj Uddin, *The Nation*
- May 22, 2008 **14** Mohammed Ibrahim, Express TV and *Daily Express*
- August 29, 2008 **15** Abdul Aziz Shaheen, *Azadi*
- November 3, 2008 **16** Abdul Razzak Johra, Royal TV
- January 4, 2009 **17** Mohammad Imran, Express TV
- January 4, 2009 **18** Tahir Awan, Freelance
- February 18, 2009 **19** Musa Khankhel, Geo TV and *The News*
- August 24, 2009 **20** Janullah Hashimzada, Freelance
- April 16, 2010 **21** Malik Arif, Samaa TV

QUETTA **12 21 25 38**

**41** PANJGUR

**37** TURBAT

**35 39** KHUZDAR

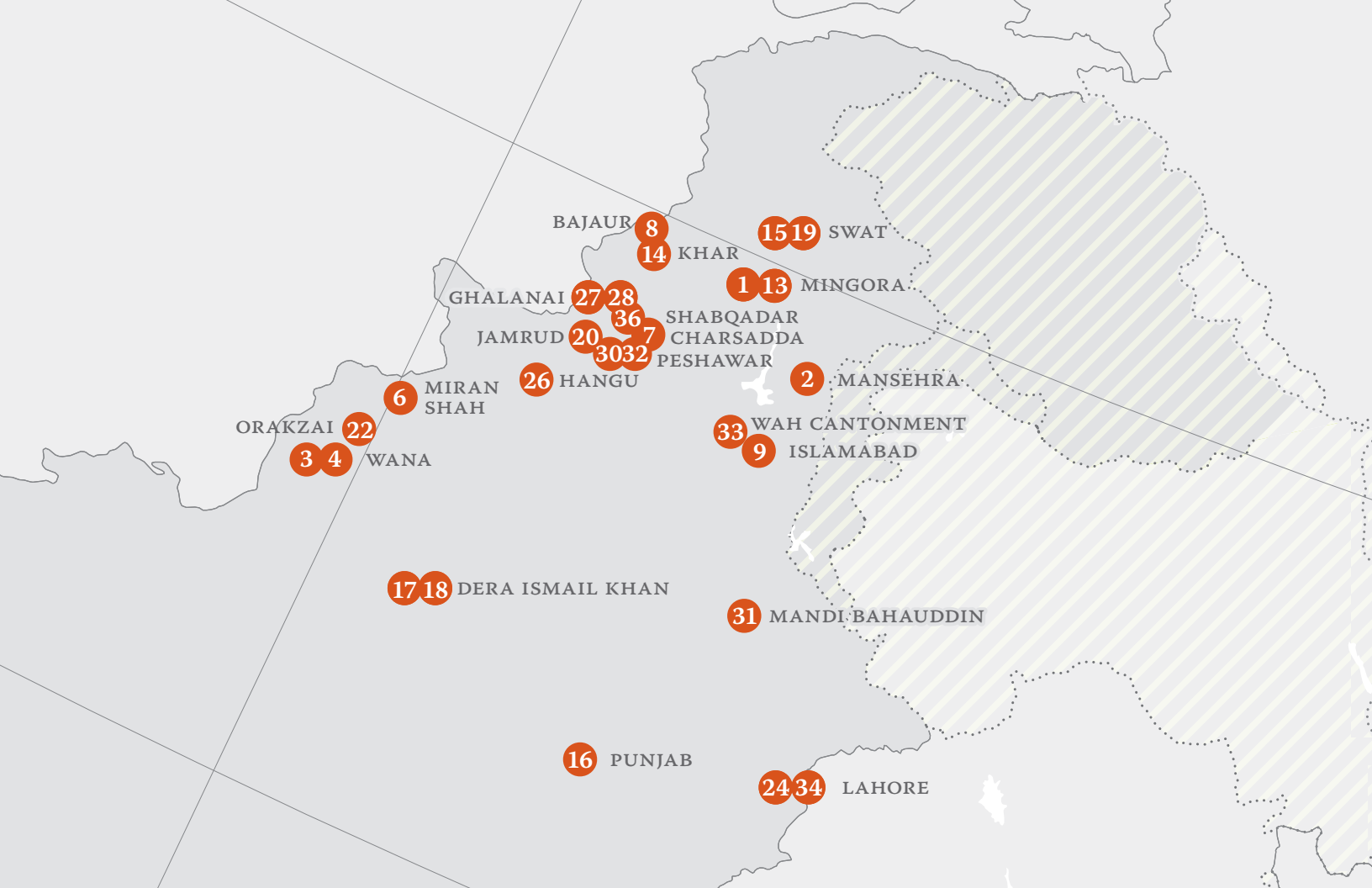
LARKANA **5**

**23** WAHI PANDHI

KHAIRPUR **40**

**10 29 42** KARACHI

MIRPUR KHAS **11**



- April 17, 2010 **22** Azamat Ali Bangash, Samaa TV
- May 9 or 10, 2010 **23** Ghulam Rasool Birhamani, *Daily Sindhu Hyderabad*
- May 28, 2010 **24** Ejazul Haq, City-42 TV
- September 6, 2010 **25** Ejaz Raisani, Samaa TV
- September 14, 2010 **26** Misri Khan, *Ausaf* and *Mashriq*
- December 6, 2010 **27** Abdul Wahab, Express News
- December 6, 2010 **28** Pervez Khan, Waqt TV
- January 13, 2011 **29** Wali Khan Babar, Geo TV
- May 10, 2011 **30** Nasrullah Khan Afridi, Khyber News Agency, Pakistan Television, *Mashriq*
- May 29 or 30, 2011 **31** Saleem Shahzad, *Asia Times Online*
- June 11, 2011 **32** Asfandyar Khan, *Akhbar-e-Khyber*
- June 17, 2011 **33** Shafiullah Khan, *The News*
- October 7, 2011 **34** Faisal Qureshi, *London Post*
- November 1, 2011 **35** Javed Naseer Rind, *Daily Tawar*
- January 17, 2012 **36** Mukarram Khan Aatif, Deewa Radio
- May 19, 2012 **37** Razzaq Gul, Express News TV
- May 28, 2012 **38** Abdul Qadir Hajizai, WASH TV
- September 29, 2012 **39** Abdul Haq Baloch, ARY Television
- October 7, 2012 **40** Mushtaq Khand, Dharti Television Network and *Mehran*
- November 18, 2012 **41** Rehmatullah Abid, Dunya News TV, *Intikhaab*
- November 22, 2012 **42** Saqib Khan, *Ummat*





Soldiers guard a street in Gilgit after an extremist group threatens violence. REUTERS/AKHTAR SOOMRO

## Intimidation, Manipulation, and Retribution

A couple of years ago, Hamid Mir, Najam Sethi, Umar Cheema, and other prominent figures in the news media began going public with the threats they were receiving from intelligence agencies. It was a risky calculation, but the silence, they reasoned, encouraged intimidation and allowed impunity to persist.

Cheema, a journalist with *The News* who was exposing corruption in the army, had repeatedly been warned by officers of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate to stop writing. The last official notice came during a meeting with the head of the ISI's Islamabad detachment, when a colonel told Cheema he was overdoing it with his articles about the thrashing of a civilian professor at the army-run National University of Modern Languages. The university's registrar, the man who had beaten the professor, was an ex-brigadier, and Cheema was accusing the army of protecting its own.

The ISI meeting was cordial, but it was the last of its kind. In the next encounter, in September 2010, Cheema was pulled over at night by men dressed as police commandos. They told him he'd hit and killed a pedestrian. He knew they were lying but had to follow. He was taken to a safe house, stripped naked, beaten to a pulp, and filmed. "When they released me, they told me not to go public. They took pictures of me naked, forcing me to take poses, and said if I spoke up the pictures will be put on YouTube," Cheema recalled. "After that, when I was headed home, I was thinking: What should I do?" Speak out, he wondered? "I told myself I'll have to do it. Silence won't help me."

Cheema's writing is more forceful than ever today, but the fear hasn't left and neither has the feeling that

he is sometimes being followed. The next time he was pursued, as he was traveling with family and chased through the streets, he went public again. But soon he stopped. He realized he would start to seem paranoid.

It's a tricky dance that journalists must improvise. If they are covering security, the wars, and the militants, they will inevitably have contacts in the security establishment, which is where the trouble usually begins. Journalists like Mir, Sethi, or Mohammad Malick will attack one piece of the establishment too hard, the threat rises to a serious enough level that they have to leave the country, the crisis passes, and they resume their attacks.

After the May 2011 U.S. raid on Abbottabad, as the TV anchors pounded the military for being incompetent, Hamid Mir, one of the most popular personalities on Geo TV, got a call from a brigadier that the director general of intelligence at the time, Shuja Pasha, wanted to see him. Here's how the conversation with Pasha proceeded, according to Mir:

"Mr. Mir, this system and Pakistan cannot co-exist."

"What system?" asked Mir.

"The parliamentary form of democracy and Pakistan."

"Do you want a presidential form?" asked Mir.

"Yes."

"This is not your job. It's the job of Parliament to change the constitution."

Pasha then spoke abusively about the son of the Punjab chief minister, the son of the president, the sons of other chief ministers. "Do you want your children ruled by these sons?" he asked Mir.

## THE ISI SHOULD 'DEFLATE ITS LARGER-THAN-LIFE IMAGE' AND FOCUS INSTEAD ON ITS MANDATED JOB, ONE JOURNALIST TESTIFIED.

"We had a very bad meeting," Mir told me when we met in Islamabad. "He is talking politics the whole time." After that meeting, parliamentary democracy and the sons of different politicians began taking a critical beating from talk show hosts and columnists. And suddenly they were all promoting Imran Khan, the popular cricketer-turned-populist-politician who led the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, or PTI, in the May 2013 elections. Pasha had decided Khan was the man to back. "Politicians called me, 'Mir, Mir, I want advice. Should I join Imran Khan? Pasha is putting pressure on us.'"

When I asked the ISI whether Pasha had been pushing support for Imran Khan, a security official denied the reports. "Pasha was never pressuring any politicians to join PTI," he said. "There are allegations and people are saying PTI is being patronized by Pasha, but there is no truth to it. I have asked Pasha many times."

But another TV anchor said he had a similar run-in with the ISI. "Before Abbottabad they called me because we were criticizing the ISI's political role, which kept breaking with the political parties," said the anchor, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Two officers met with him and put him on the spot: "Why do you keep criticizing ISI? Why do you utter the name of ISI?" The anchor said he pushed back: "So I said, 'Why can't we name the ISI in that situation?' I told them my two complaints were why do you harass journalists and why do you interfere in the political process." The senior officer denied the ISI did either. And so the anchor asked why Pasha was supporting Imran Khan if the agency had no political agenda. "They said I shouldn't criticize the ISI and I shouldn't name the ISI. I didn't agree with their views, and at the end of the meeting the senior person told the junior person: 'He needs more sessions.'"

Such a comment might seem empty were it not for Pakistan's well-established record of pressure, intimidation, and retribution against critical news media. Saleem Shahzad, an *Asia Times Online* reporter, was summoned to ISI offices in October 2010 after writing an article about the release of a Taliban leader. During the meeting, the director general of the ISI media wing, Rear Adm. Adnan Nazir, told him that the story had embarrassed the country and urged him to retract the article and divulge his sources, Shahzad told colleagues. When he refused, Shahzad said, Nazir made a parting comment: "Saleem, I must give you a favor. We have recently arrested a terrorist and have recovered lot of data, diaries and other material during the interrogation. He has a hit list with him. If I find your name in the list I will let you know."



Police display a bomb found under the car of Hamid Mir in 2012. REUTERS/SOHAIL SHAHZAD

Shahzad said he interpreted the comment as a threat against his life. We know all this because Shahzad was unnerved enough to write up notes of the meeting and put them in an email to his editor, Tony Allison, and others. He asked his editor to "keep this email as record if something happens to me in the future." He also sent a version of the email to Nazir, which he labeled "for the record" in the subject line.

Seven months and many critical stories later, Saleem Shahzad was dead. During the official investigation into Shahzad's murder, a number of other journalists reported being pressured by intelligence officials during encounters similar to the meeting described by Shahzad. "The ISI must deflate its larger-than-life image, focus on its mandated job, and evolve a transparent policy in its relationship with the media," Imtiaz Alam, secretary-general of the South Asian Free Media Association, said in testimony before the official commission of inquiry. Halting the practice of harassing journalists, he said, was one place to start.

In testimony before the commission of inquiry, Nazir denied making the comments attributed to him in Shahzad's emails. Nazir acknowledged getting Shahzad's "for the record" email but said it was not "expedient" for him to respond. Brig. Zahid Mehmood Khanare, who testified on behalf of the ISI, denied that the agency engaged in the harassment of journalists.

In a way, the army and ISI are in shock. Ever since Pervez Musharraf allowed the licensing of private broadcasters in 2002, there's been an explosion of media outlets. The press has never been so free or so critical. Nor have members of the security establishment ever had to answer for their policies, mistakes, and crimes in a public forum the way they



## ONE PROMINENT JOURNALIST DESCRIBES 'A LONGSTANDING TRADITION OF ISI PENETRATION' OF THE NEWS MEDIA.



Najam Sethi and his wife, Jugnu Mohsin, take exceptional measures to ensure their safety. REUTERS

do now. After the bin Laden raid, the media demanded answers from the army: How could the United States have carried out the operation undetected? Was the army, with its bloated budget, incompetent or in cahoots with the United States? Which was it?

Their honor insulted, intelligence and military officials began thrashing back at the media, using the methods they have always relied on: intimidation or “ownership,” that is, buying the loyalty of journalists or encouraging loyalty through access. “There is a longstanding tradition of ISI penetration of the media that goes back 30 years and started in a big way during Gen. Zia ul-Haq’s regime,” said author and journalist Ahmed Rashid, a CPJ board member. “Allowing a free electronic media during Musharraf’s time certainly presented a challenge for the intelligence agencies because of the large number of TV stations that were started. But they have been successful in penetrating all the TV networks in one way or the other.”

So amid the Abbottabad outcry, the agency fed trusted news anchors a harshly anti-American line. One political analyst said the Pakistani Army chief, Ashfaq Kayani, allowed the ISI to push the stance with loyal news media. For Kayani, it was a matter of upholding the military’s honor, said the analyst, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “He’s basically a person who believes in honor above all. He’s crazy about honor. He comes from a community where honor is worth killing for.” The ISI chief was similarly motivated. “Pasha told a friend of mine, ‘We went ballistic when they killed Osama. We lost our minds we were so angry.’”

Just about every newspaper and TV station has someone who is either sympathetic to the ISI and army point of view, or willing to be sympathetic for a price. Many Pakistanis can even name them. The ISI’s media

wing calls up preferred anchors, talking heads, and newspaper editors and tells them what line to push. When the Kerry-Lugar Act of 2009 was adopted, for example, the security establishment was furious because it meant U.S. funds could be directed to civilian authorities without going through the military. Although most of the Pakistani public had little idea what the law said, anchors and talking heads were brought into the military’s media wing and told why it was against the national interest. Almost immediately the airwaves were filled with TV programs bashing the Kerry-Lugar Act.

Other methods are used to secure media loyalty: Many Pakistani cities, for example, have what are called “media colonies,” where the government sets aside land for journalists at subsidized rates. A free, even courageous press is not mutually exclusive of a manipulated press anywhere in the world—and certainly not in Pakistan. As an American official in Pakistan put it: “It’s a manipulated media, but remarkably free. Right now in the Urdu newspapers they plant scare stories about the U.S. building a cantonment in Islamabad with 300 Marines secreted away in the U.S. Embassy!” Not just that, but the Urdu press and even Mir on his TV show have accused Americans working in Pakistan of being spies, even giving out their addresses.

The major networks employ a calculated balancing act. So, for instance, Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman, chief executive of the Jang Group, will allow the army to sway his anchors on Geo TV, but follow the America-bashing with a half-hour slot of Voice of America. “It’s a game you play constantly with how much influence and how much you can get versus where to concede,” said Faisal Bari, senior adviser on Pakistan with the Central Eurasia Project of the Open Society Foundation.

Increasingly on the important talk shows, liberal voices are being eased out, replaced by retired generals and other right-wing pundits. Geo has been careful to balance out the programs of Sethi and Mir—both of whom regularly criticize and expose the security establishment’s wrongdoing—with programs supporting the military’s heroic efforts or simply airing patriotic songs. Geo has learned its financial lessons over the years. Under Musharraf, the network was simply shut down for a few months. Under President Asif Ali Zardari, in 2011, the government twice tried to revoke Geo’s sports channel license, a step that could have cost the station millions had it not been blocked by the Supreme Court. Though the government officially cited the lack of a “security clearance” for the revocations, everyone understood that Zardari’s government was trying to take revenge for Geo’s



## THE NETWORKS EMPLOY A BALANCING ACT. PROGRAMS CRITICAL OF THE SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT ARE FOLLOWED BY ONES THAT EXTOL THE MILITARY'S HEROISM.

constant attacks on the president. For the most part, media and government thrust and parry, finding a way to live with each other. Until someone goes too far.

Sethi, longtime editor-in-chief of *The Friday Times* and host of his own show on Geo, has managed through connections, humor, high visibility, and sheer gumption to evade physical punishment numerous times. At times, Geo took to cutting off the audio when he touched on “problematic” issues such as criticizing the judiciary. And then there were the threats to his life since 2007, first from the Taliban for calling them terrorists instead of “militants” as other journalists do, and then from the ISI. Intelligence officers have either raged at him or passed on messages from their higher-ups that his programs went too far in their criticisms of the army and the ISI after the revelation that bin Laden was hiding out in Abbottabad, not far from the Pakistani capital.

On May 2, 2011, Sethi did a program about the raid in which he said the army generals were either complicit or incompetent. This led to a stormy meeting with then-ISI chief Pasha in which each accused the other of misplaced patriotism. The Mehran naval base was attacked soon after, and journalist Shahzad was kidnapped in Islamabad. A few days later, his tortured corpse was fished out of a canal. Sethi went on air and alleged that the ISI was behind the kidnapping and killing. “Saleem had confided to me and others like the representative of Human Rights Watch in Pakistan, Ali Dayan Hasan, and the head of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society, Hameed Haroon, before his kidnapping that he was in serious trouble with the ISI and feared he might be dealt with harshly,” Sethi told me from his home in Lahore.

After Shahzad’s murder, Sethi also devoted several of his nighttime talk shows to Al-Qaeda’s infiltration of the military, and officials’ turning a blind eye to it—a subject Shahzad first exposed in his columns for *Asia Times Online*. A senior minister whom Sethi would not identify informally advised the journalist to back off if he cared for his safety.

The ISI was furious with Sethi, although he was not alone in accusing the agency of killing Shahzad. The difference in Sethi’s case is that he is relentless and provocative and his late-night program is one of the most popular. He has also had extensive experience being “disappeared.” Sethi was imprisoned at length during the 1970s in connection with the Baluch uprising. In 1999, after an interview with the BBC about corruption in the Pakistani government, Sethi was



Umar Cheema’s reports on corruption and abuse of power led to threats and intimidation. AFP/AAMIR QURESHI

dragged from his home and detained on accusations of treason.

“I was their prisoner for seven months and I know how these things happen. I was in solitary like a football from one interrogation to another—MI, ISI, Special Branch—and I know where people are taken and what happens and I also know who is killed and who isn’t.” So despite their warnings to back off, Sethi stood by his accusations of ISI involvement in Shahzad’s murder and went even further. “They only meant to rough him up and teach him a lesson,” he said. “The ISI can be mean but they don’t kill people in custody just like that. I reconstructed the scene of what probably happened. I said that Saleem probably died of asphyxiation owing to injuries on his ribs. I said what normally happens is that people are picked up and gagged and blindfolded, and put in a sack or gunny bag. They first try to destroy your confidence by creating fear. When the victim arrives at the secret destination, he is dumped on the floor. Then the kicking and shouting starts. The kicks are random, but one ends up in a fetus position. You get kicked in the head and the ribs. It’s the ribs in the upper part of the body. I said when the autopsy is done we should look out for evidence of such torture. Four days later the autopsy said the sixth rib and 10th or 12th rib were cracked and had punctured the lungs. These guys who do all this are not experts in torture.”

The army and intelligence services were, not surprisingly, upset with Sethi’s exposition. “Every journalist in town who had links with these guys said they are hopping mad at you,” Sethi said. And yet he still demanded a commission of inquiry in Shahzad’s death. The government said no. So he went on TV. “I said, ‘I’m calling on the media to boycott the government and the army’s news. We demand a commission of inquiry and if there



## THE COMMISSION THAT INVESTIGATED SHAHZAD'S MURDER CONCLUDED THAT THE 'CULPRITS CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED.' EVERY KEY QUESTION WENT UNANSWERED.

is none we won't publish the news or press statements" of the Inter Services Public Relations, Sethi said. A few days later, the government announced a commission of inquiry headed by a judge and including a journalist representative of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. Sethi then criticized the inclusion of pro-military bureaucrats in the commission of inquiry, which further incensed the military.

The commission was meant not only to inquire into the background and circumstances of Shahzad's abduction and murder but also to identify the culprits. Instead, after laying out the testimonies of several journalists, Human Rights Watch, police, and the ISI, the report in effect said that any number of the actors in the war on terror could have killed Shahzad.

"Almost every journalist of repute in the country has rubbished the report of this commission, which exonerates the ISI and leaves all key questions unanswered," Sethi said. In particular, the commission concluded that "the culprits cannot be identified."

The Home Ministry eventually issued an advisory to police and intelligence agencies regarding threats against Sethi and his family, which prompted the government to provide police guards. Nevertheless, Sethi learned through what he described as high-placed sources that he was on a death list and needed to leave the country. Sethi and his wife, Jugnu Mohsin, spent three months in 2011 as senior fellows at the New America Foundation in Washington. While Sethi was away, a credible source back home called and warned him to stay away for some more time. He was told of a plot by a jihadi organization close to the military to kill him, along with two other critical journalists, Khaled Ahmed and Imtiaz Alam, both of whom work for the South Asia Free Media Association, which is in the bad books of the military for advocating détente and peace with India. But Sethi decided to risk a return. He cut short his trip to the United States, returned to Pakistan, and in his first TV show from his hometown said that he was "threatened by state and non-state actors" and that "if anything happened to him or his family the top leadership of the military would be held responsible."

For months, he ventured out of his home only selectively and politely declined invitations to attend or speak at local conferences. The house is protected by armed guards, an alarm system, and surveillance cameras. The Sethis have invested in an armored vehicle. Geo built a studio in his home from which he broadcast a thrice-weekly show on current affairs. But the threats continued, as did Sethi's provocative shows. In spring

2012, Sethi did a series of stories that dissected the ills of the army and ISI, exposing how spies, beginning under Musharraf and now Kayani, have slowly taken over an army that used to be well-organized and strait-laced. A highly placed minister whom Sethi would not name warned him that the government was picking up chatter that the security establishment was annoyed. In a telling comment, the minister told Sethi that the government didn't want to lose him and that, "you know power lies somewhere else." It's true, but it's very unsettling to hear from a high-level government official.

Attacks have come from other corners as well. "Journalists close to the ISI are constantly accusing me in print and on the Internet of being in the pay of America," he said, an accusation that amounts to an incitement to violence for the Jihadi networks. "This is a repeat of what happened to me in 1999 when I ran a campaign exposing corruption in the Nawaz Sharif government at the highest level. The pro-government media accused me of being an 'Indian agent' and I was imprisoned for alleged treason. After I was freed by the Supreme Court, the government's dirty tricks department slapped me with dozens of trumped-up income tax evasion cases in order to harass me. The Musharraf government withdrew all the cases and the income tax officers who had done the Sharif government's bidding came and apologized to me later. So did the then-prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, who said he was put up to it by a 'misguided' henchman. I am going through the same sort of harassment today at the behest of the ISI, and the income tax department is coming under pressure to harass me."

**H**amid Mir is one of the most popular faces on television, and part of his appeal is precisely what makes many wary of him. He's a talented showman and has cultivated sources in every arena. Back in the days when he secured an interview with Osama bin Laden, he was accused of being too close to the ISI—how else could he have pulled off such a coup? These days he is considered sympathetic to the militants and close to Zardari. Whatever his political leanings, he relishes a good fight on the air.

At the end of 2007, in the midst of the lawyers' movement against Musharraf, Mir was banned from Geo TV for four months by the general himself. The movement began in March of that year after Musharraf sacked Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry and lawyers took to the streets demanding his reinstatement and the upholding of the constitution. The media (including Mir) played a significant part in supporting the movement. Mir took his show

## THE CONFLICT IN BALUCHISTAN IS WIDELY IGNORED BY MAJOR MEDIA. IT'S NOT ONLY HARD TO REPORT, THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT IT COVERED.

to the road, organizing street programs, gathering huge crowds. In 2009, he infuriated the army by reporting from within the Taliban—which had allegedly kidnapped him and then let him tell their side of the story. Then his colleague Musa Khankhel was killed. “It became clear if you’re killed, nothing will happen,” he said of both the Khankhel and Shahzad cases.

In 2011, he decided to take up the issue of Baluchistan. With the intensifying insurgency, the families of missing Baluch formed camps in the park across from Parliament in Islamabad and outside the press club in Karachi, anywhere they could get a hearing. The war in Baluchistan is widely ignored by the major media outlets in Pakistan. As BBC journalist and novelist Mohammed Hanif put it: “It’s hard to report. The agencies don’t want them to report it. The networks don’t want to offend the Punjab office”—meaning the authorities in Islamabad—“and there’s no advertising coming from Baluchistan so they don’t care. But probably the biggest factor is fear.” As soon as the BBC goes to Baluchistan, he added, “Intelligence follows them, stops them, and drives them back. Even reporting the basic facts that someone was kidnapped or killed is increasingly risky.”

Still, Mir did a show on Baluchistan. “Young people want an independent homeland,” Mir told me when we met in Islamabad, shortly after he had returned to the country after a brief departure for security reasons. “But elders are saying, ‘We can’t survive without Pakistan. We’ll be slaves to Iran or Afghanistan if we secede. It’s better to fight for our rights.’” One Baluch leader said the Pakistani Army was really a Punjabi army. So Mir presented the statement to two Punjabi parliamentarians live on his show. “They said, ‘Yes he’s right.’ I got a text message after the show. ‘We will beat you on the road. An army officer will teach you a lesson. You’ll be naked.’” This is almost exactly what happened to Umar Cheema in 2010, so Mir forwarded him the message. The next day Cheema published the whole affair in *The News*. The episode quickly became a cause célèbre in Parliament, with Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, the National Assembly opposition leader, claiming he was getting the same threats.

Another commission was formed. The presidential engine revved up. Rehman Malik, then interior minister, called Mir and told him to forward the number and message. The inspector general of police called. Zardari called. Malik called again and tried to persuade him to take two dozen police for security, an offer Mir said was intended to frighten him. “I am not an Indian agent and if I am that kind of high-value target why don’t they inform me in writing?”

In the end, Mir took one police guard at home and one at the office.

Then, in January 2012, Interior Ministry sources told him that the phone numbers from which the threatening messages were sent belonged to serving members of the ISI. Despite such evidence, the public accusations against Mir got even more absurd. The agency claimed he was a CIA agent and had actually hacked his own phone to make it seem as if he had received messages from the ISI.

Mir eventually dropped the issue and moved on to other reporting. He did a show about the family of missing persons who had set up camp in front of Parliament. An elderly woman had filed a petition to the Supreme Court to get back her three sons, dead or alive. They had been abducted from jail by men who were alleged in court to have been with the ISI. One son was dead. By the time the other two were produced in court, their mother had died. Mir showed the covered faces of the accused abductors as they appeared in court, and he lambasted them on television.

After the show Zardari called Mir. Here is how Mir recalled the conversation:

“You are playing with fire. I don’t want to lose you. It will be another bad patch on the name of my government if you are killed.”

“What shall I do?” Mir asked him.

“Be careful,” said Zardari.

“Who wants to kill me?”

“I don’t know.”

“Sir, I suppose you are the supreme commander of the armed forces of Pakistan.”

“Try to understand!” Zardari shouted.

The president’s office did not respond to CPJ’s request for comment on Mir’s depiction of the conversation.

Mir persisted with his shows. The next one was an exclusive interview with Younis Habib, a banker who was on his death bed and decided to expose how in the 1990s the ISI plundered taxpayers’ money with the connivance of the Pakistani army to manipulate politics. The story was an important turn in the Mehrangate scandal, which brought a former army chief of staff and ISI director general to court for the first time in Pakistani history, with both sides accusing the other of misconduct.

Shortly after the show, Mir was advised to leave the country, and he finally did for a week. But as Mir told me, if he is having these kinds of highly dramatic, publicized troubles, just imagine what’s going on in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Waziristan, and Baluchistan beyond the eyes of the public. ■



## 'In case something happens to me'

Seven months before his murder, *Asia Times Online* reporter Saleem Shahzad was summoned to a meeting with Rear Adm. Adnan Nazir, director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate's media wing. During the October 17, 2010, meeting, Shahzad said, he was pressured to retract a story the agency considered embarrassing and urged to disclose his sources for the piece.

Shahzad resisted but came away with a sense of foreboding. He wrote up notes of the meeting and sent them to Nazir in an email the following day. Shahzad also forwarded copies to Ali Dayan Hasan, a Human Rights Watch representative, and Hameed Haroon, head of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society, asking them to keep the notes "in case something happens to me."

Here is the unedited text of the email to Nazir, which was introduced as evidence in the official inquiry into Shahzad's murder:

For future reference:

Meeting details as on October 17, 2010 at the ISI headquarters Islamabad between DG Media Wing ISI, Rear Admiral Adnan Nazir and Syed Saleem Shahzad, the Bureau Chief Pakistan for Asia Times Online (Hong Kong). Commodore Khalid Pervaiz, the Deputy Director General of Media Wing ISI was also present during the conversation.

Agenda of the meeting: discussion on Asia Times Online story published on October 15, 2010, titled Pakistan frees Taliban commander (see [http://atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/LJ16Df02.html](http://atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/LJ16Df02.html)).

The meeting discussed the following issues.

1- Syed Saleem Shahzad told Rear Admiral Adnan that an intelligence channel leaked the story. However, he added that story was published only after a confirmation from the most credible Taliban source. Syed also explained that DG ISPR was sent a text message about the story, but he did not respond.

2- Rear Admiral Adnan Nazir had the view that story caused a lot of embracement for the country but observed that issuing a denial from the government side is no solution. He suggested Syed Saleem Shahzad should write a denial of the story.

3- Syed Shahzad refused to comply with demand and termed it impractical.

4- Rear Admiral Adnan was curious to know the source of the story as it is a shame that information would leak from the office of a high profile intelligence service.

5- Syed Shahzad called it an intelligence leak but did not specify the source.

6- The conversation was held in an extremely polite and friendly atmosphere and there was no mince word in the room at any stage. Rear Admiral Adnan Nazir also offered Syed Saleem Shahzad a favor in following words.

"I must give you a favor. We have recently arrested a terrorist and have recovered a lot of data, dairies and other material during the interrogation. The terrorist had a hit list with him. If I find your name in the list, I will certainly let you know."

Shahzad wrote a separate email to his *Asia Times Online* editor, Tony Allison, that recounted the meeting in similar terms. But his October 17 email to Allison, as described in the report of the official commission of inquiry, more explicitly laid out his fears. Shahzad said he considered Nazir's parting words to be a "murder threat."

In testimony before the commission, Nazir acknowledged receiving Shahzad's email but denied making the comments attributed to him. He said he did not respond to Shahzad because he did not consider it "expedient." ■

## CONCLUSION



President Asif Ali Zardari speaks on the fifth anniversary of the assassination of his wife, Benazir Bhutto. REUTERS/NADEEM SOOMRO

**T**he murder of Saleem Shahzad in May 2011 galvanized journalists across Pakistan in a way that few other events have. For a short time their power as a “union” was felt. They secured a commission of inquiry. They named ISI officers who had threatened Shahzad and many other journalists. They detailed those encounters in a public record available on the Internet. The resulting report offers a series of promising recommendations, saying in part:

- “...that the balance between secrecy and accountability in the conduct of intelligence gathering be appropriately readjusted with the aim of restoring public confidence in all institutions of the state;
- “that the more important [intelligence] Agencies ... be made more law-abiding through a legislation carefully outlining their respective mandates and role; that their interaction with the media be carefully institutionally streamlined and regularly documented;
- “... that, in this regard, a forum of Human Rights Ombudsman be created for judicial redressal of citizens’ grievances against Agencies, particularly the grievances of the Media against attempts to intimidate, harass and harm them;
- “that the Islamabad and Punjab Police should continue investigating the matter diligently, impartially

without any fear or favor by interrogating all those (whosoever) who should in the normal course be interrogated in the present incident ...”

And yet, “those recommendations have been made a hundred times,” said Hina Jilani, one of Pakistan’s pre-eminent human rights lawyers who helped found the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and who has been appointed to U.N. human rights fact-finding missions around the world. She echoed the sentiments of every journalist I spoke to regarding the report. “The recommendations are very abstract,” Jilani said. “They don’t give a direction for an investigation.” In fact, the commission itself says that making the intelligence agencies more accountable is up to the executive and Parliament and that all the commission can do is offer ideas for reform. The report does conclude with an eloquent summation of the history of the press in Pakistan and the universal need for a free press to hold government accountable. Then, acknowledging their own impotence, the report’s authors write: “The failure of this probe to identify the culprits does, in all seriousness, raise a big question about our justice system’s ability to resolve such ‘mysterious’ incidents even in the future.”

As Najam Sethi, editor of *The Friday Times* and a Geo TV host, said: “The commission was reluctantly set up. It became a cover-up job to protect the ISI.”



## GOVERNMENT LEADERS CAREFULLY CALCULATE WHEN TO CONFRONT THEIR POWERFUL BROTHERS IN THE ARMY AND INTELLIGENCE SERVICES. THEY RARELY DO.

Without an independent and powerful judicial system—or even just a functioning one—the press is at the mercy of ruthless forces like the Muttahida Quami Movement, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, the Taliban, or any other faction that uses violence as a tool of its trade. Unfortunately, the judiciary—including the police, judges, lawyers, investigators—are underfunded, unprotected, and in many cases, petrified to go after the MQM, to say nothing of the ISI, the army, and sectarian terrorists. The prosecutors in Karachi who won their case against six Pakistan Rangers in the killing of an unarmed civilian have now lost their jobs and have no means to take care of their families. The government that appointed them does not back them up because the government is also beholden to the army and intelligence, and its leaders must carefully calculate when to go head to head with their more powerful brothers. They rarely do.

If Shahzad's murder had repercussions for the intelligence agencies, it is only that they must be more careful about leaving traces of their work behind. Yes, Taliban spokesman Ihsanullah Ihsan claimed responsibility for the killing of Mukarram Khan Aatif, but journalists from the region doubt that the Taliban are operating without agency intervention. Pakistan has still not changed its policy of keeping extremist assets around for its wars with India and Afghanistan. And once the Taliban take credit for a murder, there is no need for an investigation. In the case of Wali Khan Babar, suspects have been accused but the witnesses have been murdered. The MQM holds such powerful sway that almost no journalist in Karachi would go on the record with his fears or suspicions. Even the Taliban do not inspire such terror.

The ISI and the MQM, with their strong-arm tactics, have dominated this report. For journalists, they are among the fiercest Goliaths standing in the way, sometimes physically, sometimes psychologically.

After several weeks in the country I talked with a security official, a colonel, who speaks to foreign media on behalf of the ISI. He talks only on condition of anonymity. I asked him about the threats Shahzad believed he was receiving from Rear Adm. Adnan Nazir, which the reporter articulated in an email to his editor and others. "You can read anything into it," the official said, dismissing the comments Shahzad attributed to Nazir. "I don't read it as threatening."

When I asked him to respond to the accusations

that the ISI were behind the killings of Shahzad, Aatif, Musa Khankhel, and Janullah Hashimzada, he dismissed the charges as lies. When I told him that journalists testify to being intimidated and harassed by agents of the ISI, he lost his temper. He accused me of bias against the ISI. And he warned me about the trap of "the Goebbels theory: Repeat a lie so often that it becomes the truth." Whether he was playing the role of the unfairly accused or expressing genuine frustration, his ensuing comments were revealing both for what they say about the ISI's relationship with the Taliban, and the extremely wide gap between what the agency purports to want for its country and the policies it's carrying out.

He lashed out at Hamid Mir and Najam Sethi for complaining that the ISI threatens them. "What is the journalists' motivation?" he asked. "Why would they want to belittle the efforts that the ISI has put into fighting this war?" And he said, "We don't have time for these people. We are engaged in a war with people who are killing my sons and daughters and brothers. My actions are not sufficient to prove to everybody or anybody that I am sincere in my effort in this war on terror and I'll do anything and everything in my power to eliminate this menace from my country? I don't want my children and grandchildren to live in a country where bombs are exploding left, right, and center, and 40,000 people have died in suicide attacks and IEDs and 150,000 troops of my army are engaged in continuous war!" He excoriated the United States and the 48 other countries that make up the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. They claim to have come to bring peace, he said, but in reality they have set the region on fire—and then have blamed it all on Pakistan. He recited the foreigners' complaints: "Pakistan has safe havens. Pakistan is protecting Haqqanis. Quetta shura [the Taliban leadership] is in Pakistan." And his frustration grew. "Even today the Pentagon report talks about Afghanistan not being able to achieve peace and stability because of safe havens in Pakistan. The Americans, with all the technology available to them, with no restrictions whatsoever on rules of engagement, are unable to control the terrorists or so-called terrorists?"

Then he took another tack, saying, yes, there are Taliban safe havens in Pakistan. "Let's say I agree the Haqqanis are under my protection in Pakistan," he said. Then he calculated the distance from Miran Shah, capital of North Waziristan, where the Haqqanis are, to the Afghan border (20 kilometers) and then on to



In Karachi, a protester denounces the 2009 murder of Geo TV reporter Musa Khankhel. REUTERS/ATHAR HUSSAIN

Kabul (270 kilometers). “Are you saying the ISI is so powerful that they can protect them all the way to Afghanistan? Jalaluddin—the Haqqani patriarch—“is senile. Siraj”—his son—“is fighting this war. And to the best of my knowledge he spends 20 days a month in Afghanistan. What you can’t do in Afghanistan you say we should do here?”

There are so many problems with every one of these statements. On the one hand, he suggests, perhaps Pakistan is harboring “your” enemies. On the other, he says why don’t “you” catch Haqqani when he crosses into Afghanistan where “you” have troops—as if this were all a cat and mouse game. But let’s leave that aside. He was getting to his real point, which is one of the underlying motivations for Pakistani support of the Taliban. The real problem, he said, is not those safe havens. The problem of Afghanistan is not Pakistan. “It’s the entire Pashtun nation which you [the West] have alienated because of your actions.” The United States, he said, brought in the wrong Pashtun with Hamid Karzai—“even the Pashtuns don’t accept Karzai as a Pashtun”—and the rest of the Afghan government is composed of Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. And that is at the heart of the Pakistani-led insurgency in Afghanistan.

Is it strange that a conversation about threats to Pakistani journalists should have detoured into a disquisition on the American-Pakistani “alliance” and the Afghan war? Not really. In fact, it lays bare the challenge facing Pakistani journalists. They must contend with a country that is effectively ruled by the security apparatus, one that perceives itself under threat from its neighbors and the United States—and, in fact, is in conflict with them all. Some Pakistani journalists, like Mir and Sethi, have enough clout, internal connections, and international support to speak out and squeak by. But those on the fringes are expendable, victims of the so-called war on terror.

Pakistani journalists often work with Western news

organizations, as Shahzad did. Some work directly for U.S. government-funded media, as Aatif did. And the Western media are viewed as a kind of espionage and propaganda wing for Western governments—that is, an enemy of the Pakistani security establishment.

Journalists will not be safe when Pakistan is at war with itself, unable to decide if it is fighting jihadis or saving them for a rainy day, unable to decide if it is an Islamic state for Sunnis only or a democratic state that can tolerate and protect Sunnis, Shia, Ahmadis, Christians, and ethnic underclasses. Is it a civilian democracy or a military state disguised as a democracy? Is it a Punjabi-run military oligarchy? Or a place where Sindhis, Baluch, Pashtuns, Hazaras all have a place? In the first weeks of January 2013, nearly 100 people were killed in bombings in a predominantly Hazara Shia section of Quetta. Three journalists covering the bombings died as well. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility. The army did nothing and said nothing. Hazaras lined the streets with coffins demanding the army take over. Thousands of Pakistanis marched through the country demanding action against extremist organizations. As of this writing, nothing has happened.

The problems facing the Pakistani state—unfair allocation of resources, military domination of the economy, corruption, impunity, debt, terrorism, sectarian killings—are so vast that they require a visionary leader and a government willing to go head to head with the all-powerful security forces. By demanding accountability from the government, journalists can play one of the most important roles. They have already formed informal alliances with the judiciary, but they need to undertake additional initiatives of their own—a more extensive SOS alert network, a pact to withhold airtime and print space from those who threaten their colleagues, and a decision by the owners of newspapers, TV stations, and Internet outlets to put protection over profit. ■



## CPJ'S RECOMMENDATIONS



Police officers guard the Supreme Court building in Islamabad. AP/ANJUM NAVEED

*The Committee to Protect Journalists offers the following recommendations to Pakistani authorities, the Pakistani news media, and the international community.*

### TO THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

- Investigate thoroughly and prosecute all those responsible for the murders of Mukarram Khan Aatif and Wali Khan Babar, along with all those responsible for the murders of witnesses and investigators connected to the Babar case. Commit sufficient resources, political support, and security to those investigations. Doing so would demonstrate that all individuals and entities are accountable under the law.
- Reopen the 21 other unsolved journalist murder cases of the past decade. Investigate thoroughly, apprehend all those responsible, and bring about successful prosecutions. Doing so would demonstrate the nation's commitment to the rule of law.
- Publicly disclose the findings of all official inquiries into attacks on journalists. In particular, release the findings of the official inquiry into the murder of Hayatullah Khan, who was found murdered in 2006 after covering a sensitive national security matter.
- Provide sufficient staffing, funding, and training for police and prosecutors. End the practice of applying political pressure on law enforcement officials. Direct the intelligence services and all other arms of government to halt all efforts to intimidate or pressure law enforcement.
- Enact a statutory framework for the nation's intelligence services, as recommended by the commission of inquiry in the Saleem Shahzad murder. The aim, the commission said, is to make the agencies "more accountable through effective and suitably tailored mechanisms of internal administrative review, and Parliamentary oversight."
- As recommended by the Shahzad commission, create an ombudsman to address "grievances of anyone who complains of misconduct, or suspected misconduct by intelligence officials and agents." News media complaints, as the commission urged, "should be treated with particular seriousness."
- Consider the adoption of journalist protection initiatives modeled on those in other nations. They include measures such as those in Mexico, which federalized crimes against journalists and established a federal special prosecutor's office for crimes against free expression, and in Colombia, which provides security directly to journalists under threat.
- Cooperate fully in the creation and implementation of programs promoted through the U.N. Action Plan on Security of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Through its delegations to the United Nations, support funding and other resources needed for the plan to move forward.





In Karachi, flags billow in the wind just before Independence Day. REUTERS/ATHAR HUSSAIN

- Create the necessary legal framework for the issuance of private broadcast licenses in the tribal areas. Set standards that are equitable with those applied elsewhere in the country, and issue licenses in a timely manner.
- Ensure that international news media are allowed access to Baluchistan and the tribal areas.

## TO PAKISTANI NEWS MEDIA

- Expand and strengthen security training and protocols across the profession. Training should be provided to journalists at news organizations of all sizes and to freelance journalists. Work with local and international NGOs that are engaged in this process.
- Expand and strengthen existing cooperative professional efforts, ensuring that all key professional groups are represented. Speak with a unified voice in condemning and seeking action in response to attacks, threats, and intimidation of the news media. Consider drafting and promoting professional guidelines to assist journalists and news organizations confronting issues of security and ethics. In Colombia, for example, news organizations came together to develop guidelines for covering violent conflict.
- Work cooperatively to create and implement programs promoted through the U.N. Action Plan on Security of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.
- Report on issues of anti-press violence, including individual attacks, threats, and intimidation of the

news media, and Pakistan's broad progress in implementing the U.N. Action Plan.

- Promote higher educational opportunities for journalists. Most universities offer undergraduate and graduate courses in media studies or communications, but not in journalism. Large media houses and professional groups, in particular, should prioritize and provide support for the establishment of Urdu- and English-language journalism schools.

## TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- U.N. member states should support the funding and resources needed to fully implement the U.N. Action Plan on Security of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.
- International donors should provide financial support and expertise for security training of Pakistani journalists. Donors should focus on initiatives aimed at freelance journalists and those who work for mid-size and small news outlets.
- International news organizations should ensure that security training is provided to all of their local journalists. International news outlets should closely examine the extreme risks their local journalists face, adjust their policies in conformance with those risks, and ensure those policies are fully explained to journalists in the field. The U.S. Broadcasting Board of Governors should pay special attention to the unique risks that journalists face when working for U.S. government-funded news agencies.





A lock symbolizes the choice facing many Pakistani journalists: Keep silent or risk attack. REUTERS/ATHAR HUSSAIN

## Journalists Killed 2003-2012

### Motive Confirmed

*CPJ research has determined that 42 journalists were killed in Pakistan in direct relation to their work from January 1, 2003, through December 31, 2012. An additional 12 journalists were killed in unclear circumstances during the time period. Capsule reports on each death follow, beginning with cases in which CPJ has confirmed a work-related motive.*

#### **Fazal Wahab, freelance**

January 21, 2003, in Mingora

**W**ahab, a freelance writer, was shot by unidentified gunmen as he sat in a roadside shop in Manglawar Bazaar, near the resort town of Mingora in northwestern Pakistan. The shopkeeper and his young assistant also died in the attack.

Wahab, who lived in Mingora, had published several books in Urdu and Pashto that were critical of local religious leaders and Islamic militant organizations. Among Wahab's work was the book, *Mullah Ka Kirdar* (The Mullah's Role), which analyzed the Islamic clergy's involvement in politics. He had also completed a manuscript about Osama bin Laden and the Taliban.

Local journalists and human rights activists told CPJ that Wahab had received threats for years in connection with his journalism. The independent Human

Rights Commission of Pakistan found that police took no evident action to apprehend the killers.

#### **Sajid Tanoli, *Shumal***

January 29, 2004, in Mansehra

**T**anoli, 35, a reporter with the regional Urdu-language daily *Shumal*, was killed in the town of Mansehra in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, which is now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Tanoli was stopped on a highway, dragged from his car, and shot several times, the official Associated Press of Pakistan reported.

Tanoli had written critical stories about the head of the local government, Khalid Javed, including a piece published three days before his murder that accused the official of involvement in an illegal liquor business, news reports said. Police filed murder charges against Javed,

prompting the official to flee, according to news reports. Although Javed eventually returned, the murder charges were never revived, according to Kiran Nazish, a journalist who has studied anti-press attacks in Pakistan.

**Allah Noor, Khyber TV  
Amir Nowab, Associated Press Television News  
and Frontier Post**

February 7, 2005, in Wana

Gunmen in South Waziristan fatally shot Allah Noor, a journalist for Peshawar-based Khyber TV, and Amir Nowab, a freelance cameraman for Associated Press Television News and a reporter for the *Frontier Post* newspaper. The journalists were riding with colleagues in a bus transporting them from the town of Sararogha, where they had covered the surrender of a suspected tribal militant, Baitullah Mehsud.

A car overtook the bus about 7:30 p.m. near the town of Wana, and assailants opened fire with AK-47 assault rifles, according to The Associated Press, which quoted Mahmood Shah, chief of security for Pakistan's tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. Two other journalists riding in the bus were injured. Anwar Shakir, a stringer for Agence France-Presse, was wounded in the back during the attack, according to news reports. Dilawar Khan, who was working for Al-Jazeera, suffered minor injuries. Nowab was also known professionally as Mir Nawab.

Days later, a group calling itself Sipah-e-Islam, or Soldiers of Islam, claimed responsibility for the killings in a letter faxed to newspapers. It accused some journalists of "working for Christians" and of "being used as tools in negative propaganda ... against the Muslim mujahideen."

Local journalists blamed officials for not doing more at the time of the murders. They said no attempt was made to stop the gunmen's vehicle even though the attack took place in an area under government control. They also said no real investigation into the murders took place.

The Pakistani military had begun an offensive against suspected Al-Qaeda fighters in South Waziristan in early 2004.

**Munir Ahmed Sangi, Kawish Television Network**  
May 29, 2006, in Larkana

Sangi, a cameraman for the Sindhi-language channel, was shot while covering a gunfight between members of the Unar and Abro tribes in the town of Larkana, in southeast Pakistan's Sindh district, according to local media reports. At least one other person was killed in the clash, which Sangi recorded before he died. The station broadcast his video.

Police said Sangi was killed in crossfire, although some colleagues believe he might have been deliberately targeted for the station's reporting on a *jirga*,

or tribal council, held by leaders of the Unar tribe, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. An uncle and colleague of Sangi had recently been attacked in connection with the station's reports that two children had been punished by the tribal court, the journalist union said.

Mazhar Abbas, then the secretary-general of the journalist union, said Sangi's body was not recovered for several hours after he was shot. Journalists in Larkana staged a sit-in to protest the killing of their colleague.

The independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said Sangi had received threats in connection with his coverage of alleged abuses by Altaf Hussain Unar, a provincial minister. The Sindh Home Department said that four people were arrested after Sangi's death and that three police officials were suspended. Unar was arrested in a separate case in 2008, but was not charged in relation to the killing of Sangi.

Despite the initial arrests, the suspects were never brought to trial, according to Hadi Sangi, brother of the slain journalist, and court documents reviewed by CPJ. Hadi Sangi also said that he and his brother's widow, Reshman Sangi, had received repeated threats.

**Hayatullah Khan, freelance**

June 16, 2006, in Miran Shah

Khan's body was found by villagers in the North Waziristan town of Miran Shah, where he had been kidnapped six months earlier. Khan was abducted on December 5, 2005, by five gunmen who ran his car off the road as his younger brother, Haseenullah, watched helplessly. Local government officials and family members said Khan, 32, had been found handcuffed and shot several times. His body appeared frail and he had grown a long beard since he was last seen, Pakistani journalists told CPJ.

The day before his abduction, Khan photographed what apparently were the remnants of a U.S.-made missile said to have struck a house in Miran Shah on December 1, 2005, killing senior Al-Qaeda figure Hamza Rabia. The pictures, widely distributed by the European Pressphoto Agency on the day they were shot, contradicted the Pakistani government's explanation that Rabia had died in a blast caused by explosives within the house. International news media identified the fragments in the photographs as part of a Hellfire missile, possibly fired from a U.S. drone.

Khan, who was also a reporter for the Urdu-language daily *Ausaf*, had received numerous threats from Pakistani security forces, Taliban members, and local tribesmen because of his reporting.

During Khan's six-month disappearance, government officials provided his family with numerous and



---

## Journalists Killed 2003-12

often contradictory accounts of his whereabouts: Khan was in government custody, soon to be released; Khan had been abducted by “miscreants”; he had been taken by Waziristan mujahideen; he had been flown to the military base at Rawalpindi and was then detained in Kohat air base.

Khan’s relatives were told by hospital workers that he had five or six bullet wounds and that one hand had been manacled in handcuffs typically used by Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate. Mahmud Ali Durrani, Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States, dismissed the reported presence of the handcuffs as circumstantial and said the cuffs could have been planted to incriminate the government. No autopsy was performed.

An investigation led by High Court Justice Mohammed Reza Khan was conducted, but the results were not made public. Hayatullah Khan’s family said they were not interviewed by the judge or other investigators. North West Frontier Gov. Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai told CPJ that North Waziristan was not secure enough to risk exposing a judicial figure to kidnapping or death. CPJ has repeatedly sought the release of the report, making a direct request to President Asif Ali Zardari in 2011. The report remained a secret as of February 2013.

In November 2007, Khan’s widow was killed in a bomb that was detonated outside her home.

### **Mehboob Khan, freelance**

April 28, 2007, in Charsadda

**K**han, a photographer, was killed in a suicide bomb attack aimed at Interior Minister Aftab Sherpao. The minister escaped with minor injuries, but 28 people died in the attack at a political rally in North West Frontier Province, which is now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Three other journalists were injured in the attack.

Khan, a 22-year-old who had recently begun his journalism career, had contributed photos to local and national publications. He was believed to be working at the time. Follow-up reports said the bomber was believed to have been a teenage male, and that security at the event was lax.

### **Noor Hakim Khan, *Daily Pakistan***

June 2, 2007, in Bajaur

**K**han, a correspondent for the *Daily Pakistan* and a vice president of the Tribal Union of Journalists, was one of five people killed by a roadside bomb in the Bajaur region of the North West Frontier Province, now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Behroz Khan, the Peshawar-based reporter for *The News*, confirmed news reports that the victim was

returning from covering a *jirga*, or tribal council. He had been invited to witness the demolition of a house belonging to the perpetrator of a February car bombing that had killed a local physician. The demolition was part of the disposition of the tribal council case.

Khan was traveling with a local official and a tribal chief who had taken a role in the case, according to news reports. Their car was third in a convoy returning from the area, reports said, suggesting it might have been targeted.

### **Javed Khan, *Markaz* and DM Digital TV**

July 3, 2007, in Islamabad

**K**han, a photographer for the Islamabad-based daily *Markaz* and a cameraman for U.K.-based DM Digital TV, was shot in the chest and neck while caught in crossfire between government forces and the students of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad, according to media reports. Four other journalists were wounded in the clashes.

News reports said gunfire had come from both sides in the standoff. The source of the fatal shots was not immediately clear. Pakistani security forces had surrounded the mosque in an effort to end a months-long standoff. The mosque, seen as pro-Taliban, had been the center of efforts to remove what leaders saw as undesirable activity such as massage parlors and music shops.

### **Muhammad Arif, ARY Television**

October 19, 2007, in Karachi

**A**rif was among more than 130 people killed in a bombing during a rally held to celebrate the homecoming of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. The cameraman, who was on assignment, was survived by his wife and six children. Bhutto was assassinated two months later at a rally in Rawalpindi.

### **Zubair Ahmed Mujahid, *Jang***

November 23, 2007, in Mirpur Khas

**M**ujahid, correspondent for the national Urdu-language daily *Jang*, was shot while traveling on a motorcycle with another journalist in the southern province of Sindh, according to local news reports. He was targeted by unidentified gunmen also traveling by motorcycle.

Local journalists believed Mujahid was slain because of his investigative reporting, according to Owais Aslam Ali, secretary-general of the local media group Pakistan Press Foundation. Mujahid was known for his critical writing on issues like mistreatment of the poor by local landlords and police in his *Jang* weekly col-

umn, "Crime and Punishment." His coverage of alleged police brutality had led to arrests and suspensions of police officers, Ali told CPJ. Mujahid was survived by a wife and four sons. No arrests were made.

### **Chishti Mujahid, *Akbar-e-Jehan***

February 9, 2008, in Quetta

An unidentified assailant shot Mujahid, a veteran columnist and photographer, in the head and chest as he left his house, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and local news reports. A spokesman for the banned insurgent group the Baluch Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the murder in a phone call to the Quetta Press Club, saying Mujahid was "against" the Baluch cause, local news reports said.

Mujahid, an ethnic Punjabi, received several telephone threats after writing about the killing of Baluch leader Balach Marri in November 2007, according to the journalists union. *Akbar-e-Jehan*, published by the Jang Media Group, was among the country's largest Urdu-language weekly magazines.

### **Siraj Uddin, *The Nation***

February 29, 2008, in Mingora

Uddin died in a suicide bombing that took the lives of more than 40 people, according to Pakistani news reports. No organization claimed responsibility for the attack, which occurred at the funeral of a slain police officer and wounded about 80 people, including two other journalists.

The Swat Valley was a focal point of conflict at the time. Militants had taken over much of the area in 2007, and government forces were reasserting some control by early 2008.

### **Mohammed Ibrahim, *Express TV and Daily Express***

May 22, 2008, in Khar

Ibrahim, a reporter for Express TV, was gunned down by unidentified men outside Khar, the main town of the Bajaur tribal area, according to news reports. The journalist was returning by motorcycle from an interview with local Taliban spokesman Maulvi Omar, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and Imtiaz Ali, a *Washington Post* correspondent based in the nearby regional capital of Peshawar.

The assailants took the footage of Ibrahim's interview with the Taliban spokesman, said Ali, citing information from local journalists. Ali said that Ibrahim also worked for the Urdu-language *Daily Express*. No arrests or claims of responsibility were made.

### **Abdul Aziz Shaheen, *Azadi***

August 29, 2008, in Swat

A Pakistani airstrike hit the lockup where Shaheen was being held by a local Taliban group in the Swat Valley, according to local news reports citing a Taliban spokesman. The spokesman, Muslim Khan, said Shaheen was among at least 25 people killed in the strike, according to the *Daily Times* newspaper. The precise location of the Taliban hideout was not reported.

Militants abducted Shaheen, who worked for the local Urdu-language daily *Azadi* and sometimes filed for other papers, on August 27, 2008, according to local news reports. Owais Aslam Ali, secretary-general of the Pakistan Press Foundation, told CPJ that local journalists believed the Taliban abducted the journalist because of his work.

Shaheen's car was set on fire a week before he was abducted, although it was not clear whether the Taliban were responsible for that attack, the group reported. It said the journalist was kidnapped from the Peuchar area of the Matta Tehsil subdivision of Swat.

### **Abdul Razzak Johra, *Royal TV***

November 3, 2008, in Punjab

Six armed men dragged reporter Johra from his home in the Mianwali district of Punjab and shot him, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. The attack came a day after his report on local drug trafficking was aired nationally.

Colleagues said Johra, 45, who had done earlier reports on the drug trade, had received threats telling him to stop covering the issue. Police took no evident steps to investigate the murder, according to local journalists.

### **Mohammad Imran, *Express TV* Tahir Awan, freelance**

January 4, 2009, in Dera Ismail Khan

A suicide bomber killed Imran, a cameraman trainee for Express TV, and Tahir Awan, a freelance reporter for the local *Eitedal* and *Apna Akhbar* newspapers, in North West Frontier Province, now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and local news reports.

The fatal explosion occurred in the wake of a smaller blast and apparently was intended to target the early responders to the scene, the reports said. At least five other people were killed and several more injured, including police and civilians, in the early evening attack, according to the news reports.



---

## Journalists Killed 2003-12

### **Musa Khankhel, Geo TV and *The News***

February 18, 2009, in Swat

No one claimed responsibility for the killing of Khankhel, who died in the first violation of a truce called two days earlier between the government and local militant groups, according to local and international news reports. Khankhel was targeted while covering a peace march led by Muslim cleric Sufi Muhammad, father-in-law of local Taliban leader Maulana Fazlullah, the reports said. Muhammad was seeking to recruit his son-in-law to join a cease-fire agreement he had negotiated with the government.

Geo Managing Director Azhar Abbas told CPJ that Khankhel had become separated from the rest of his four-person reporting team in a militant-controlled area near the town of Matta. He suffered multiple gunshot wounds to the torso and back of the head, Abbas said. A BBC report citing Khankhel's brother said the journalist had been abducted at gunpoint from the peace march, and that his hands and feet were bound when his body was discovered.

Khankhel had told supervisors that the army was retaliating against him for his aggressive coverage of the military offensive in Swat. He said he was being threatened, denied access, and barred from news conferences. Hamid Mir, his supervisor at the time, told CPJ that Khankhel called him on the day of the murder to say that he feared for his life and believed the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate intended to kill him. Mir said Khankhel was killed just hours later.

### **Janullah Hashimzada, freelance**

August 24, 2009, in Jamrud

Four unidentified gunmen fired on the Afghan journalist and his colleague, Ali Khan, while they were traveling on a public minibuss near the town of Jamrud, Khyber Agency, northwestern Pakistan, according to local and international news reports.

A white sedan carrying the gunmen intercepted the bus with Hashimzada and Khan as it was en route to Peshawar from the Afghan border town of Torkham, according to The Associated Press. The gunmen targeted the journalists, killing Hashimzada and severely injuring Khan, according to AP. No other injuries were reported. The type of vehicle used by the gunmen is standard issue for Pakistan's intelligence agency.

Both journalists worked for Afghanistan's Shamshad TV. Hashimzada, the station's Peshawar-based bureau chief for Pakistan, also reported for AP, the Pajhwok

Afghan News agency, and other news outlets, the reports said. No one claimed responsibility for the killing, according to news reports.

Hashimzada was known as a critic of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, and his reports had challenged the authorities and intelligence agencies in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, the reports said. "He received threats four weeks ago to leave Peshawar and not report Taliban and Al-Qaeda activity in Pakistan. It is clear ... he lost his life for reporting," Danish Karokhel, director of Pajhwok Afghan News agency, told CPJ.

Daud Khattak, a local journalist who later joined Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague, said Hashimzada had recently interviewed a Taliban spokesman in the Hyatabad area of Peshawar. The story was potentially embarrassing to the military because it showed that a prominent Taliban official was living openly in a main city.

### **Malik Arif, Samaa TV**

April 16, 2010, in Quetta

Arif, a cameraman, was killed in a suicide bombing at a local hospital, news reports said. The blast occurred outside the emergency ward of Civil Hospital in Quetta, capital of restive Baluchistan province, killing at least eight people and injuring numerous others, including five journalists. The journalists were covering a Shia demonstration outside the hospital, where a prominent local Shia bank manager had been taken after an attack.

### **Azamat Ali Bangash, Samaa TV**

April 17, 2010, in Orakzai

Bangash, 34, a cameraman and correspondent, was killed in a suicide bombing while covering food distribution in a refugee camp near Orakzai, in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas near the border with Afghanistan. He was the second Samaa journalist killed in a suicide bombing in two days.

As many as 47 refugees from fighting in northwest Pakistan died when a pair of suicide bombers, striking minutes apart, attacked a distribution line, news reports said. The BBC and CNN said the Sunni group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility for the explosions, which targeted the Shia refugees. The bombing was one of five in northwest Pakistan that took place between April 14 and April 17, 2010.

Bangash, who died at a nearby field hospital, was survived by a wife and three children.

### **Ghulam Rasool Birhamani, *Daily Sindhu Hyderabad***

May 9 or 10, 2010, in Wahi Pandhi

The body of Birhamani, 40, a reporter for the *Daily Sindhu Hyderabad*, was found outside his hometown of Wahi Pandhi, Sindh province, on May 10, a day after he was reported kidnapped. The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and the media support group Pakistan Press Foundation reported that his body was badly scarred and showed evidence of torture.

Birhamani's family believed he was killed because of his reporting on ethnic issues in Sindh province, the journalists union said. A colleague told the newspaper *Dawn* that Birhamani's story on the marriage of a 12-year-old girl to a 22-year-old man might have been the specific trigger for the attack. Birhamani had received threats from members of the Lashari tribe just days before he was seized, the press foundation said.

Hundreds of journalists turned out for a march to protest his killing. *Dawn* quoted some of the demonstrators as saying that police were reluctant to investigate because of political sensitivities. The journalists union said Birhamani had worked for many years for various Sindhi-language dailies. He left behind a wife, two sons, and a daughter.

### **Ejazul Haq, City-42 TV**

May 28, 2010, in Lahore

Haq, 42, a technician for the local Lahore cable station City-42 TV, was killed while working at the scene of an armed attack on a Muslim minority Ahmadi mosque, according to news accounts and CPJ interviews.

Haq was reporting live via cellphone from the scene, which was in his neighborhood. Colleagues at City-42 TV said the shots that struck him could be heard on the air. It was not clear who fired the fatal shots during the fighting, in which Sunni Muslim gunmen and suicide bombers attacked the mosque while police and military groups engaged them in close fire.

Pakistani media reports said Haq was survived by a wife, a daughter, and a son. An eight-year veteran of the profession, he had worked for City-42 for the previous three years, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

The mosque was one of two Ahmadi mosques that came under attack that day. More than 90 people were killed in the sieges, which lasted for several hours. The events were covered live by many of Pakistan's news channels.

### **Ejaz Raisani, Samaa TV**

September 6, 2010, in Quetta

Raisani, a cameraman, died in a military hospital of gunshot wounds he suffered three days earlier while covering a rally that turned violent in Quetta, according to local and international news reports.

A suicide bomber detonated explosives at a Shia demonstration, prompting gunfire and other violence that killed more than 70 people and left 200 others injured, including several other journalists, news reports said. The Taliban and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi each claimed responsibility for the bombing, one in a series of recent assaults on Shia gatherings, local news reports said. Some news reports linked the violence that followed the Quetta bombing to the surviving protesters.

Mohammad Sarwar, a driver working for Aaj TV, was also killed in the violence. Six journalists were among the wounded. Raisani was married with two children.

Police took 20 suspects into custody and Baluchistan Chief Minister Nawab Aslam Raisani formed a judicial tribunal to investigate the attack, *The Express Tribune* reported. As of February 2013, no suspect had been convicted of a crime, according to Zahid Hussain, director of news at Samaa TV.

### **Misri Khan, *Ausaf* and *Mashriq***

September 14, 2010, in Hangu

Khan, a newspaper reporter and head of the local journalists association, was shot several times as he entered the press club building in Hangu, near the border with Afghanistan, according to news reports and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. Shahid Sabir, news editor for the Urdu-language daily *Ausaf*, said two or more assailants had apparently been lying in wait.

Khan was a reporter for *Ausaf*, as well as *Mashriq*, an Urdu-language daily published in Peshawar, provincial capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Khan was also president of the Hangu Union of Journalists.

The English-language daily *Dawn* reported that Khan had received threats from militant organizations. Khan had been a journalist for more than 20 years, reporting for several newspapers during his career, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. He was survived by a wife, six sons, and five daughters.

### **Abdul Wahab, Express News**

#### **Pervez Khan, Waqt TV**

December 6, 2010, in Ghalanai

Wahab and Khan were among 50 people killed in a double-suicide bomb attack in the Mohmand tribal district, according to international news reports.

The journalists were covering a meeting of tribal



---

## Journalists Killed 2003-12

leaders and government officials in Ghalanai, the administrative center of the region, when two suicide bombers wearing police uniforms detonated explosives. News reports said the meeting was called to discuss the formation of an anti-Taliban militia. Agence France-Presse said a Pakistani Taliban group took credit for the attack, which injured more than 100 people.

The journalists worked as both cameramen and reporters.

### **Wali Khan Babar, Geo TV**

January 13, 2011, in Karachi

**B**abar, 28, was shot shortly after his story on gang violence aired on the country's most widely watched broadcaster, Geo TV. At least two assailants intercepted the journalist's car at 9:20 p.m. in Karachi's Liaquatabad area, shooting him four times in the head and once in the neck, Geo TV Managing Director Azhar Abbas told CPJ. Witnesses said one assailant spoke to Babar briefly before opening fire, Abbas said.

In April, police announced the arrests of five people and said additional suspects were at large. In all, police said, at least 17 men were involved in the murder plot. Police, based on statements given by the suspects, described a plot organized by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, or MQM, Pakistan's third-largest political party and considered its most influential secular political organization. A Joint Investigation Team report said the killing had been ordered by Agha Murtaza, a South Africa-based MQM operative. Zulfikar Mirza, home minister of Sindh, was outspoken at the time in saying that MQM operatives were responsible for the killing.

Local journalists believe the killing was prompted by Babar's aggressive reporting on violent political turf wars, extortion, targeted killings, electricity theft, and land-grabbing.

Just weeks after Babar was slain, several people connected to the investigation were murdered. They included a police informant, two police constables, and the brother of an investigating officer. One of the constables, Asif Rafiq, was on the scene when Babar was murdered and had identified the plotters' vehicle. On November 10, 2012, two gunmen aboard a motorcycle killed Haidar Ali, the only remaining witness in the case, near his home in the Soldier Bazaar area of Karachi. He was due to testify in court two days later.

The original prosecutors in the case—Muhammad Khan Buriro and Mobashir Mirza—told CPJ that they were threatened and eventually fired. They fled the country in late 2011.

### **Nasrullah Khan Afridi, Pakistan Television and *Mashriq***

May 10, 2011, in Peshawar

**A**fridi, a reporter for Pakistan Television and the local *Mashriq* newspaper, was killed when his car blew up in the city of Peshawar, according to local and international news reports. An explosive device was detonated remotely shortly after he returned to the vehicle, which was parked in a densely populated shopping area, news reports said.

The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists said Afridi, who was also the president of the Tribal Union of Journalists, had moved to Peshawar to flee militant groups.

In May 2006, CPJ reported, unidentified assailants had lobbed two hand grenades at Afridi's house in Bara, the main town of Khyber Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Afridi had been the target of a death threat issued on a pirate radio station run by the Islamic militant organization Lashkar-e-Islam. The threat came after Afridi reported that the authorities suspected Lashkar-e-Islam of being responsible for an attack in which a paramilitary soldier was injured.

The journalist moved to Islamabad after the attack but said officials there would not heed his complaints of being under threat. He then moved to the wealthy Hayatabad area of Peshawar. But in mid-2007, grenades were lobbed at his home there. No one was injured in that attack.

Afridi was a popular, senior figure in the tightly knit journalist community in the dangerous areas along the Afghan border. Hundreds of people, including colleagues, political leaders, and tribal elders, attended his memorial service. No arrests were made in the case.

### **Saleem Shahzad, *Asia Times Online***

May 29 or 30, 2011, in Mandi Bahauddin

**S**hahzad, 40, vanished on May 29 after writing about alleged links between Al-Qaeda and the Pakistani Navy. His body was found on May 31 in a canal near the town of Mandi Bahauddin, about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south of the capital, Islamabad. His friends said the body showed signs of torture around the face and neck. He had told colleagues that he had been receiving threats from intelligence officials in recent months.

Shahzad was reported missing after he failed to show up for a televised panel discussion in Islamabad. He was scheduled to discuss his recent article for *Asia Times Online* in which he reported that Al-Qaeda, having infiltrated the Pakistani Navy, was be-



hind a 17-hour siege at a naval base in Karachi on May 22. He said the attack came after military or security officials refused to release a group of naval officials suspected of being linked to militant groups. The attack, coming soon after the U.S. killing of Osama bin Laden on May 2, was deeply embarrassing to the Pakistani military. Earlier in May, three navy buses carrying recruits were blown up via remote control devices in Karachi, the large port city where the navy has its headquarters.

Shahzad's death also came a few days after the release of his book, *Inside the Taliban and Al-Qaeda*.

For months, the journalist had been telling friends that he had been warned by intelligence agents to stop reporting on sensitive security matters. In October 2010, Shahzad told Ali Dayan Hasan, a researcher for Human Rights Watch in Pakistan, that he had been threatened by a top official at a meeting at the headquarters of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate in Rawalpindi.

Hasan said Shahzad sent him a note describing the meeting "in case something happens to me or my family in the future," Human Rights Watch reported. Hameed Haroon, president of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society and a former employer of Shahzad, said he had received a similar message at about the same time.

In July 2011, *The New York Times* reported that U.S. officials had reliable intelligence that showed that the ISI was responsible for Shahzad's murder. Pakistan's official commission of inquiry concluded in January 2012 that the perpetrators were unknown, a finding that was widely criticized as lacking credibility.

### **Asfandiyar Khan, *Akhbar-e-Khyber***

June 11, 2011, in Peshawar

### **Shafiqullah Khan, *The News***

June 17, 2011, in Wah Cantonment

**A**sfandiyar Khan, a reporter for the newspaper *Akhbar-e-Khyber*, died in a double bombing that took the lives of more than three dozen people. Shafiqullah Khan, a trainee reporter at the daily *The News*, died six days later from extensive burns and shrapnel wounds suffered in the attack. Seven other journalists were injured.

The first, small blast went off at a market, drawing a large crowd that included journalists covering the story, according to news reports and local journalists. A second, larger explosion, apparently a suicide bomb, went off after the crowd had grown.

The attack took place near the city center, in an area where military facilities are concentrated and where many major Pakistani media organizations have their offices. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombings, and it was not clear if journalists or military personnel were the targets.

### **Faisal Qureshi, *London Post***

October 7, 2011, in Lahore

**T**he body of Qureshi, 31, an editor for the political news website *The London Post*, was discovered about 2 a.m. by his brother Zahid after family members found blood stains outside the journalist's house, the Pakistani daily *The Express Tribune* reported. Police reports said Qureshi's throat had been cut and described his body as showing signs of torture, *The Express Tribune* said.

Another brother, Shahid, who lives in London, told CPJ that the killers had taken the journalist's laptop and telephone. Shahid Qureshi, who also wrote for *The London Post* website, told CPJ that he and his brother had received death threats from men who claimed they were from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, or MQM. *The London Post*, which was widely recognized as anti-MQM, had run a series of critical stories on the party's exiled leader, Altaf Hussain.

Police arrested Faisal Hameed, a childhood friend of Qureshi, in December 2011, alleging monetary motives, according to local news reports. As of February 2013, Hameed remained in custody pending trial. An investigative documentary produced by Samaa TV raised numerous questions about the police investigation and cast doubt on the allegations against Hameed.

### **Javed Naseer Rind, *Daily Tawar***

November 2011, in Khuzdar

**R**ind's body was found in Khuzdar on November 5, nearly two months after he was abducted, according to news reports. The journalist had been shot multiple times in the head and chest, and his body showed numerous signs of torture, local news media reported. The killing appeared to have occurred shortly before the discovery.

An editor and columnist with the Urdu-language daily *Daily Tawar*, Rind was kidnapped in his hometown of Hub in southern Baluchistan province on September 11. *The Daily Tawar* was known for its coverage of the many conflicts between rival groups and the government. Rind was also an active member of the separatist Baluch National Movement, news reports said.

The Baluchistan Union of Journalists condemned Rind's kidnapping and murder and demanded that the government put together a high-level committee to investigate the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the killing.

### **Mukarram Khan Aatif, *Deewa Radio***

January 17, 2012, in Shabqadar

**T**wo gunmen killed Aatif, a reporter for the Pashto-language service of the U.S. government-funded Voice of America, at a mosque in Shabqadar, north of Peshawar. The assailants, who struck during evening prayers, shot Aatif multiple times before fleeing on motorcycles, police told reporters. Aatif died of his injuries at Lady Reading Hospital in Peshawar. An imam was injured in the attack.



---

## Journalists Killed 2003-12

Taliban spokesmen spoke to several news outlets, taking responsibility for the killing. Ihsanullah Ihsan told The Associated Press that Aatif had been warned “a number of times to stop anti-Taliban reporting, but he didn’t do so. He finally met his fate.”

Several CPJ sources said they were skeptical Aatif had been killed on the orders of the Taliban or for the publicly stated reasons. Aatif told friends and relatives that he started receiving threats from military and intelligence officials immediately after covering a November 2011 attack by U.S.-led NATO forces on Pakistani army check posts at Salala, near the border with Afghanistan. Twenty-four Pakistani soldiers died in the attack. Aatif filed reports on the attack for Deewa Radio and took part in what are called two-ways, which are live exchanges with the station’s studio journalists.

Aatif had spoken to local residents who said a Taliban hideout was just two kilometers from the army check posts, a tribal area journalist told CPJ. The Taliban’s proximity to the army posts was highly sensitive information because it could have provided justification for the American attack. An official with the U.S. National Security Council told CPJ that a Special Forces team launched the attack after taking fire from the area of the Pakistani check posts.

Deewa Radio said Aatif’s reports explained the geography of the area but did not mention the Taliban. Deewa did not respond to CPJ’s repeated queries seeking information on what was said by the station’s studio journalists during their live two-way exchanges with Aatif. Deewa said no archive of Aatif’s reports was available. Multiple CPJ sources in Pakistan and the United States said the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate was believed to be behind the murder. A Pakistani security official said the speculation was unsubstantiated.

### **Razzaq Gul, Express News TV**

May 19, 2012, in Turbat

**G**ul, 35, a senior reporter with Express News TV in Turbat, a city in the Kech district of Baluchistan, was abducted near his home on the evening of May 18, according to news reports. His body was found the next day with several bullet wounds and marks that indicated he had been tortured, his family told local journalists.

Gul was a member of the Baluch National Movement, a nationalist political organization, and was the secretary of the Press Club of Turbat, according to news reports. His colleagues at the club told Express News TV that Gul had not mentioned receiving any threats. No group claimed responsibility for his death.

### **Abdul Qadir Hajizai, WASH TV**

May 28, 2012, in Quetta

**A**rmed men shot Hajizai, a headmaster of a middle school who also worked at WASH TV, a private Baluchi-language TV channel, according to local news reports. The journalist was taken to a hospital, where he died, the reports said.

Hajizai was killed in the Basima area of Washik district, home of the Shamsi Air Field, which was used by the United States as a base for surveillance and drone operations against militants in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

Two days after Hajizai’s death, the Baluch Liberation Front, an armed separatist group, claimed responsibility for his killing and called him a government informer. The journalist’s colleagues said they were unaware of any threats made against him.

The Baluchistan Union of Journalists issued a statement protesting the killing and appealed to the Supreme Court and the Baluchistan High Court to address the rising level of threats to journalists.

### **Abdul Haq Baloch, ARY Television**

September 29, 2012, in Khuzdar

**U**nidentified assailants shot Haq as he was leaving the Khuzdar Press Club in the city of Khuzdar in Baluchistan province. Haq was the secretary-general of the press club and a longtime local correspondent for ARY Television.

ARY Television said it was not aware of any threats directed at Haq. But Hamid Mir, a prominent Pakistani journalist, wrote after Haq’s death that the journalist had been threatened by the Baluch Musalah Diffa Army (BMDA, or the Armed Baluch Defense) in November 2011 and had subsequently been named on a hit list issued by a BMDA spokesman.

Tensions with the press had escalated after the Baluchistan High Court barred news coverage of banned groups in October 2011. Several of the banned groups began threatening local journalists for not reporting on their militant operations.

Haq’s family declined to discuss widespread assertions by his colleagues that he had been killed because security forces were angry that he was working with the families of missing Baluchis on presenting cases before the Quetta bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. At the time of Haq’s death, the court was hearing more than 100 missing-person cases in Baluchistan. Of those cases, 19 were from Khuzdar.

### **Mushtaq Khand, Dharti Television Network and Mehran**

October 7, 2012, in Khairpur

**K**hand, 35, was among six people killed when gunmen opened fire on a Pakistan People's Party (PPP) rally in Khairpur in Sindh province. A 10-year veteran journalist, Khand was a reporter for Dharti Television Network and had been the president of the Khairpur Press Club for five years. He had also worked for the Sindhi newspaper *Mehran* in Hyderabad.

Police conducted overnight raids after the shooting and arrested 10 unidentified suspects, news reports said. News accounts reported different motives for the shooting. Investigators first blamed a family feud for the attack; Geo TV reported the gunfire erupted after an argument between two rival groups at the rally.

Khand was survived by two wives and several children. After his funeral in his home village near Khairpur, his colleagues and friends demonstrated in front of the Khairpur Press Club, protesting against the government for failing to protect its citizens.

### **Rehmatullah Abid, Dunya News and Intikhaab**

November 18, 2012, in Panjgur

**U**nidentified gunmen on a motorcycle killed Abid in a barber shop in Panjgur district, about 375 miles (600 kilometers) from Quetta. Abid had worked as a general assignment reporter for the Urdu-language *Dunya News*, a news and current affairs TV channel, for several years and had also worked for the Urdu-language daily *Intikhaab*.

According to the Pakistan Press Foundation, Abid was shot six times, once in the head. The PPF also reported

that Eesa Tareen, president of the Baluchistan Union of Journalists, said Abid's family was unaware of any personal enmities that would have caused his death.

Aslam Raisani, chief minister of Baluchistan, issued a statement saying that "hidden hands" were attacking Baluchi journalists to stop them from working, according to news reports. Abid's colleagues at the PPF said that they believed Abid had been killed because of his reporting. The Baluchistan Union of Journalists appealed to the local and federal governments to address the rising levels of threats to Pakistani journalists.

### **Saqib Khan, Ummat**

November 22, 2012, in Karachi

**K**han, a photographer for the Urdu-language paper *Ummat*, died from injuries he sustained in a bomb explosion that occurred 30 minutes after another blast outside a Shia site in Karachi, according to the International Federation of Journalists and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. Khan was killed while covering the first explosion, the same sources said.

Police said the first blast was a suicide attack, while the second bomb was detonated with a remote-controlled device. The second bomb exploded about 50 feet from the first one, wounding reporters, police officers, and bomb disposal teams who had arrived at the scene.

The bombs exploded at a site frequently used for Shia commemoration ceremonies; Shias were celebrating the holy month of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar.

No group claimed responsibility for the twin bombings, but two days after the explosions, Taliban spokesman Ihsanullah Ihsan called Agence France-Presse and said the Taliban had dispatched more than 20 suicide bombers to target Shia Muslims.

## **Journalists Killed 2003-2012 Motive Unconfirmed**

*Here are capsule reports on journalists who were killed in unclear circumstances. When a motive is unclear, but it is possible that a journalist was killed because of his or her work, CPJ classifies the case as "unconfirmed" and continues to investigate. CPJ regularly reclassifies cases based on its ongoing research.*

### **Mohammad Ismail, Pakistan Press International**

November 1, 2006, in Islamabad

**I**smail, Islamabad bureau chief for Pakistan Press International, was found near his home in Islamabad with his head "smashed with some hard blunt object," according to Mazhar Abbas, then secretary-general of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. The Associated Press reported that a police investigator said an iron bar might have been used as a weapon.

Ismail was last seen the previous night as he was

leaving his house to take a walk. Doctors who received the body when it was taken to a local hospital told the journalists union that Ismail had been dead for a few hours before being discovered.

Ismail's family told Abbas that they were at a loss as to what could have prompted the attack. They told him Ismail, who was nearing retirement, was carrying little of value when he was assaulted. Ismail's news agency was not known for particularly critical reporting of the government, CPJ research shows.



---

## Journalists Killed 2003-12

### **Khadim Hussain Sheikh, Sindh TV and *Khabrein***

April 14, 2008, in Hub

Sheikh, a stringer for Sindh TV and local bureau chief for the national Urdu-language daily *Khabrein*, was killed by unidentified gunmen as he left his home by motorbike in the town of Hub, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of Karachi, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and the official Associated Press of Pakistan.

Mazhar Abbas, then the secretary-general of the journalists union, told CPJ he had spoken by telephone with Sheikh's brother, Ishaq, who was riding on the same motorbike at the time of the attack and had been hospitalized with gunshot wounds. Ishaq said three men on motorbikes carried out the shooting, then checked to make sure the journalist was dead before fleeing, according to Abbas. The brother said he was unaware of any dispute that might have led to the murder, Abbas said.

### **Raja Assad Hameed, *The Nation* and Waqt TV**

March 26, 2009, in Rawalpindi

Unidentified gunmen killed Hameed, a reporter with the English-language daily *The Nation* and its Urdu-language television channel, Waqt, while he was parking his car at his house.

Media accounts of the attack varied. Beena Sarwar, a media and human rights activist, looked closely into the murder and described what she found to CPJ: "His family rushed out on hearing the gunshots and found Hameed lying in a pool of blood. The bullets, fired at close range, had pierced his neck and shoulder." Doctors pronounced the journalist dead on arrival at Benazir Bhutto Hospital.

Hameed was well-known and held in high regard. He was fluent in English, Urdu, and Punjabi, and frequently appeared on Al-Jazeera, analyzing political developments in Pakistan.

The day after the attack, Information Minister Qamar-uz-Zaman Kaira told the official Associated Press of Pakistan that "sick-minded criminals must have committed the murder of a journalist in Rawalpindi" and he promised "to leave no stone unturned in investigating the heinous crime." Rawalpindi police later suspended their investigation without resolution, news reports said.

### **Wasi Ahmad Qureshi, *Daily Azadi* and *Balochistan Express***

April 16, 2009, in Khuzdar

Gunmen opened fire on Qureshi and his colleague, Muhammad Siddiq Mosiani, near a newsstand

in Khuzdar district in the southwestern province of Baluchistan on April 11, according to Qureshi's editor and local news reports.

Qureshi was treated in a local hospital for two gunshot wounds to the stomach, but died five days later, news reports said. Mosiani survived, according to the reports.

The motive for the attack was not immediately clear, according to Asif Baloch, the editor of the Quetta-based *Daily Azadi*. Local officials said they were investigating but had made no progress, he said. Although some news reports said militants from the separatist Baluchistan Liberation Army carried out the shooting, Baloch said they had not claimed responsibility and had no known reason to attack the journalist.

### **Siddique Bacha Khan, Aaj TV**

August 14, 2009, in Mardan

Unidentified gunmen ambushed correspondent Bacha Khan in the city of Mardan in North West Frontier Province, now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Aaj reported on its website.

He was shot at close range as he was returning to station offices after an interview with the family members of a former military official killed by the Taliban, the channel's bureau chief, Imtiaz Awan, said on the station's website. The journalist died en route to the hospital, according to Aaj and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

### **Lala Hameed Baloch, *Daily Intikhab***

November 18, 2010, in an area outside Turbat

Hameed's gunshot-riddled body was found outside Turbat, a city in western Baluchistan province, after he disappeared on October 25 while traveling to his home in Gwader, according to the Gwader Press Club. Local journalists believed he had been seized by Pakistani security officials, according to Mazhar Abbas, former secretary-general of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

Hameed reported for the Urdu-language *Daily Intikhab* and worked as a stringer for several other news outlets, Abbas said. He was an active supporter of the Baluch National Movement, a political organization that advocates for an autonomous Baluchistan, according to Baluch nationalist websites and local news reports. Both his reporting and his political activities were considered possible motives for his murder, according to Owais Aslam Ali, secretary-general of the Pakistan Press Foundation.

The body of another man, Hamid Ismail, was discovered with Baloch, according to local news reports. Four other bodies were found across Baluchistan during Eid

Al-Adha, according to the Lahore-based *Daily Times* newspaper. Relatives alleged that government officials had targeted the victims for their political activism.

### **Mehmood Chandio, Awaz**

December 5, 2010, in Mirpurkhas

Chandio, bureau chief for the Sindhi-language television station Awaz and president of the local press club, was killed by assailants outside his house in Mirpurkhas, Sindh province, according to news reports. Gunmen shot Chandio at least twice when he answered their knock at his door, according to Mazhar Abbas, former head of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. Chandio, 45, died after being transported to a local hospital.

The motive was not immediately clear. The media support group Rural Media Network Pakistan said Chandio had received threats related to family and business matters. He was also a former member of Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz, a political party seeking independence for the province. He was survived by his wife, mother, and six children, according to local media reports.

### **Ilyas Nizzar, Darwanth**

January 3, 2011, in Pidarak

Nizzar's body was found with multiple gunshot wounds along a dirt road in Pidarak, Baluchistan province, six days after he was reported missing, local news reports said.

Alongside Nizzar's body was that of Qambar Chakar, a Baluch Students Organization leader who disappeared from his home in Turbat on November 27, 2010. A general assignment reporter for the newsmagazine *Darwanth*, Nizzar was also considered a prominent activist, according to some local news reports.

### **Abdost Rind, freelance**

February 18, 2011, in Turbat

Rind, a 27-year-old part-time reporter for the *Daily Eagle*, an Urdu-language newspaper, was shot four times before his assailants escaped on a motorcycle in the Turbat area of Baluchistan province. He was pronounced dead at the scene, local news reports said.

Rind was also an activist in the Baluch separatist movement, which has sought greater independence for the vast region and an ultimate break from Pakistani rule. Government military and intelligence operations frequently target activists, and many Baluch journalists straddle the line between political activism and journalism.

### **Zaman Ibrahim, Daily Extra News**

April 2, 2011, in Karachi

Ibrahim was riding his motorcycle when two motorcyclists shot him in the head, according to Pakistani news reports. The journalist had worked for several small Urdu-language papers. He also was involved with a local group called the People's Aman Committee, the militant counterpoint of the Pakistan People's Party to the armed militias of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and Awami National Party. The groups are known for their violent tactics.

Ibrahim, 40, had two children. Although he had worked for several different newspapers for several years, his most recent job was at the *Daily Extra News*. Police told reporters investigating the shooting that they believed he was killed over an internal party dispute.

### **Muneer Shakir, Online News Network, Sabzbaat TV**

August 14, 2011, in Khuzdar

Shakir, who wrote for the *Online News Network* and was a correspondent for the Baluch television station Sabzbaat, was shot repeatedly by two men on a motorcycle shortly after midday as he headed home from the press club in Khuzdar, the district capital in the center of Baluchistan, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

Shakir's colleagues in the Baluchistan Union of Journalists said the 30-year-old reporter had been working on and off as a journalist for about eight years, and they did not know of any threats directed at him. Representatives of the Pakistan Press Foundation, a media support group, told CPJ that Shakir had also been an activist with Baluch separatist organizations and said that was the probable reason he was targeted.

### **Aurangzeb Tunio, Kawish Television Network**

May 10, 2012, in Lalu Ranwak

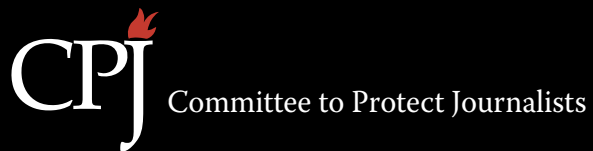
A group of armed men shot Tunio, a reporter for the popular Sindhi news channel Kawish Television Network, in the small office used as the station's bureau in Lalu Ranwak village in the province of Sindh, about 535 miles (850 kilometers) south of Islamabad, the capital, news reports said. Tunio's brother, Rustam, and their friend, Deedar Khaskheli, were also killed, the reports said.

Local journalists told CPJ the gunmen were members of the Mughairi tribe, a rival to the Tunio tribal group. Some also said they believed Tunio was murdered because of his story on a failed marriage attempt between two members of the rival clans.









330 7th Avenue, 11th floor, New York, NY 10001

+212.465.1004

[www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)

Twitter: [@pressfreedom](https://twitter.com/pressfreedom)

Facebook: [facebook.com/committeetoprotectjournalists](https://facebook.com/committeetoprotectjournalists)