

12 journalists killed, over 201 attacks against Pakistani media in 2008

ISLAMABAD: Attacks against media in Pakistan in 2008 reflected the general trend of violence in the country with 12 journalists killed and over 201 cases of abuses recorded against the media in the year, a new annual report on the state of media reveals.

Three journalists each were killed in violence in Punjab and North West Frontier Province, two each in Balochistan and Sindh and one each in Islamabad and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the research report produced by Intermedia, a Pakistani media research and development non-governmental organization, and released here Sunday, reveals.

A separate case was recorded of a journalist based in Punjab who committed suicide because of financial problems.

The research report, available along with other annual media research reports on www.intermedia.org.pk, also recorded 13 cases of arrest or abduction in which a total of 40 journalists were victims during the year. Of these, five incidents were recorded in Sindh in which five journalists were arrested by law enforcement agencies or abducted by unknown persons.

Similarly, 27 journalists were arrested or abducted in FATA in three incidents, five journalists in two cases in Balochistan and one journalist each in single cases in NWFP and Islamabad.

The research also recorded at least 41 cases of assault or injury in 2008 in which at least 74 journalists sustained serious or minor injuries. Of these there were 27

victim journalists in 16 cases in Punjab, 12 journalists in five cases in Balochistan and 12 journalists in eight cases in NWFP, five cases in Sindh and four cases in Islamabad.

At least 118 cases during 2008 were also recorded of intimidation and threats reported by journalists. Of these 39 journalists belong to Punjab, 34 to Islamabad, 22 to Sindh, 10 to NWFP, nine to FATA and four to Balochistan.

The report also recorded four cases of attacks on media property, one each in Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh and FATA.

A total of 20 cases were also recorded on ban on publications or gag orders by the government authorities of which 10 were in Islamabad, four in Sindh, three in Punjab and one each in NWFP, Balochistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

The Intermedia research report reveals that at least 208 cases of violations against media in Pakistan occurred during 2008 and the most dangerous place to practice journalism was Punjab with a total of 64 cases of violations against media recorded in the province.

The next most dangerous place was Islamabad with a total of 51 cases of violations against media based in the federal capital, 39 in Sindh, 22 in NWFP, 16 in FATA, 14 in Balochistan and one each in AJK and Northern Areas.

The statistics also reveal that during 2008, on an average every month one journalist died, more than three were arrested or abducted, six were injured in assaults, about 10 were threatened or intimidated, nearly two media organizations were issued gag orders and overall more than 17 cases of violations against the media occurred each month.

The following is the graphical representation of the research on the violations against media:

Statistics of Abuses against Media in Pakistan									
January 2008 - December 23, 2008									
Area of Incidents	Killing	Abducted/ Arrest		Assault / Injured		Intimidation	Attack on media property	Restrictions/ Ban /Censor	Total
		Incident	Victims	Incident	Victims				
Islamabad	1	1	1	4	10	34	1	10	51
Punjab	4*	1	1	16	27	39	1	3	64
Sindh	2	5	5	5	10	22	1	4	39
NWFP	3	1	1	8	12	10	0	1	23

Balochistan	2	2	5	5	12	4	0	1	14
Tribal Areas	1	3	27	2	2	9	1	0	16
North Areas	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
AJ&K	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
(Category wise Total)	13	13	40	41	74	118	4	20	209