
Crime against Media Personnel and Threats to Media Houses in Pakistan: A Journalistic Perspective

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The journalistic life in Pakistan is always on high risk as journalists are shot dead, tortured and stabbed during the course of duty. Almost all stakeholders of society remain mum over grave situation in a context wherein journalists are helpless, ill equipped and insecure, especially job satisfaction is a major concern. The number of affected journalists especially the death toll is rising with each passing day. This study is aimed to investigate the phenomenon and ascertain reasons why journalists are under constant threat in Pakistan? In spite of hundreds of incidents targeting the media officials, no dedicated study to understand the threat perception and a response thereto has been conducted at any level in Pakistan yet. Accordingly, in order to collect data the reliance regarding data collection for this study has been made on press clippings, government reports and other available information with the approach of content analysis. Albeit, this is an embryonic effort to identify the issues and challenges posing threat to working journalists but it will further pave the way to understand the complexity of issue in the times to come. The study can be expanded further basing on the preliminary study, a comprehensive and workable plan can be orchestrated for the safety and security of not only the media officials but also of media houses in Pakistan in future by promising researchers.

Introduction

Journalistic life has always been remained a subject of discussion in developing countries especially where democratic setups are flourishing. For instance, 2297 whistle blowers i.e., local journalists reporting on corruption, crime, human rights, politics, or war were reported dead around the globe, including 115 journalists from Pakistan in the past two decades (Index, 2016). The gradual upward index of victimization of journalists over the past decade has enlisted Pakistan as the 4th dangerous country for journalists across the world, with 147th

position at the World Press Freedom Index, even inferior to India, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Thailand and Palestine. Two thousand journalists have experienced harassment, kidnapping, arrest, detention, assault and injury since January 2000, as per statistics of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Civic Action Resources and the Freedom Network with an average of 125 cases every year for 16 years. An estimate says 130 journalists were killed in Pakistan since 1947, and over 100 since 2000. The confounding average for the last 16 years says a journalist killed every 58 days (PFUJ, 2018).

International Federation of Journalists says more than 2297 journalists were killed in last two decades all over the world, 309 out of this total mark-up were killed in Iraq, 146 in Philippines, 120 in Mexico, 115 in Pakistan and 109 in Russia (IFJ, 2016). If media deny to government or pressure groups then censorship is imposed against media (Norris, 2006). In this age of information, valid censorship is the right of people who can choose to not hear, read or know anything they do not like (The News, 2016).

The methods adopted by the state to hinder the free expression of media and to deter it to act as fourth pillar of state are corporate influence, government pressure, threat and political control (Štětka, 2013). There are places which are comparatively more dangerous like Baluchistan with 29 journalists killed since 2007, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and the tribal areas in Pakistan with 27 journalists killed from 2003 to 2014 (IFJ, 2016).

Inexperienced with less or no journalistic background, once exposed to war/ disaster reporting with both internal as well as external security concerns, many stakeholders like Taliban, Sectarian factions, political and military forces due to provocative media coverage. Both government and terrorist organizations wanted journalists to work as their informers. There is no presence of independent media in many districts of Baluchistan and KPK (Mir, 2016). According to International Federation of Journalists, 2,297 journalists have been killed in last 25 years, with Iraq ranking as the deadliest country since 1990. The report on Safety of Media Workers says since 2001, 47 media workers have been murdered, 164 injured, 88 assaulted, 21 abducted and 40 detained with conviction ratio of only two out of 384 cases of violence against media (Tribune, 2016). Out of a total of 164 journalists injured and assaulted since 2001, 91 were in Sindh, 70 in Islamabad assaulted by supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) during the *Dharna* [protest sit-in] in 2014 (Pakistan Press Foundation, 2015).

The murder of a reporter Saleem Shehzad as consequence of allegedly publishing the investigative news stories into purported links between Al-Qaeda and Pakistan naval officials on Asia Times was associated by the representative for Human Rights Watch, Ali Dayan Hasan, that "credible sources" claimed Shahzad was apprehended by sensitive agencies (Asia Times, 2011). So, media cannot be independent if operated with a gun to its head (Pakistan Media Watch,

2011) as establishment does not want the media to be as free as it can be (Knezivec, 2014).

In order to take protective measures, a number of national international organizations have paid special attention to safety of journalists in conflict situations (Lisosky & Henrichsen, 2011); crime(s) against journalists in Mexico (Relly et al., 2013); typology of potential risks to media practitioners (Henrichsen et al., 2015); media men deaths and target killings of journalists (Cottle et al., 2016); potential threats to media personnel in Kenya (George, 2016); challenges of safety of media workers in Nepal (Adhikary et al., 2016) and freedom of expression of media, online and offline protection of journalists.

It is generally believed that the grim and ugly scenario emerged not only from the ashes of Twin Towers or from the war on terror alone rather there is a long history of violence since the media took its roots in the society. The study underhand may explore historical perspective of violence against journalists and peril continuously looming over their heads.

1.1 Significance of Study

With increase in blood pour of media persons on streets and at war zone alike, we need to understand the basic 'whys and wherefores' regarding increase in the attacks. This study peculiar in its nature may open new vistas of opportunity to pick up issues and challenges being faced by journalists and will no doubt guide towards reasonable conclusions and recommendations for the security and safety of media persons. This study may prove to be an effort to muster the data and analyze for future scholars to use and base upon for furtherance of their study on the subject.

1.2 Research Objectives

The major objectives were designed as: -

1. To identify major threats to journalists and their families in Pakistan.
2. To understand nature of threats and crime committed against journalists.
3. To analyze infrastructure for the safety of journalists.
4. To provide recommendations for the safety of journalists.

1.3 Research Questions

The besmirched situation gives rise to the research questions that: -

1. What all are the probable threats to journalists & media houses?
2. What all are the probable reasons of threats to journalists and media houses?

3. What are the workable solutions to secure the life of journalists and media houses?
4. How to make this vital organ of state functional in the best interest of nation?

1.4 Limitations of Study

The study had inbuilt limitations which were as under:-

1. No authentic and reliable data available yet in Pakistan.
2. Lack of scholarly work on the topic resulting into reliance on press clippings.
3. No central criminal and violence record committed against media is available with Police.
4. The authenticity of record available has to be taken with a grain of salt.

1. Literature Review

Freedom of expression as well as receiving information is the right which not only be considered as basic rights rather also provides realization of many other rights. Hens et. al. (2013) stated that everyone has the right to speak and receive information. Jamil (2017) stated that every citizen has right to express as guaranteed through Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan albeit with certain restrictions that include “glory of Islam”, “law and order” and “national security”. However, though constitution guarantees freedom of expression to all and sundry but it was always chained everywhere and by everyone to the extent of authority it can exercise. The terms glory of Islam, law and order and national security are being used frequently to blindfold the media.

Ghafour (2016) stated that after 9/11, FATA in Pakistan became the most dangerous area for journalists. The district and tribal reporters, who had previously filed small stories on the back pages of mainstream newspapers, were suddenly in demand with TV channels, as local stringers across Waziristan. Nazish(2012) stated that news reporting resulted in furious response from the Taliban hence the region claimed more killing of journalists than ever after 2001 and there were 30 journalists who got killed in FATA alone because of reporting on politics and human right abuses in the region.

Bitani (2015) stated in early November 2015, Zaman Mehsud, a journalist from South Waziristan with the Urdu newspaper Daily Ummat and the president/ secretary general of the Tribal Union of Journalists South Waziristan Chapter was shot dead in the Tank district of KPK. In a statement sent to the Reuters news agency, a Taliban Commander QariSaifUllahSaif claimed responsibility for the attack. His chilling message read: ‘We killed him [Zaman Mehsud] because he was writing against us we have some other journalists on our hit list in the region. Soon we will target them.’ This was yet another reminder that the state must investigate

the killing of journalists no matter who claims responsibility. Mir (2012) stated that journalists have become sandwich between the state and non-state actors.

Heyns and Srinivasan(2013) stated that censorship was a wide ranging subject with variety of methods. State Regulatory institutions, press advice and other active and passive measures were used to deter the pen. Siraj (2009) believed media has carved its path through rigors of Martial Law and democratic governments alike. Press advice, censorship and other methods were commonly used to control the media in the past history of Pakistan.

Ghazi (2017) also stated that with the attacks on journalists by elements of the deep state, the solution was not to have yet another law, but actually such elements be held accountable. Accordingly, the research showed that there is an ample space for improvement in enhancing security measures for journalists in Pakistan. The literature search showed such study was need of the hour and good addition in existing body of the knowledge on the abovementioned phenomenon.

2. Methodology

As the study was exploratory in nature, quantitative approach with content analysis technique was used to collect data involving all possible stakeholders. The methods used are as under: -

3.1 Mapping of Crime against Journalists in Pakistan

The study revolved around mapping of crime against journalists in Pakistan. In order to map crime landscape against journalists few indicators were developed in consultation with focused group interviews and key informants' interviews. A combination of research methods and pre-existing literature was reviewed to develop this paper to systematically. The research process was as under: -

2.2 Data Source

3.2.1 Documents Consulted

To explore the issue and its pros and cons, the literature aired in electronic media and printed in the form of news items, e-papers, email archives, web documents, newspapers, speeches, reports and journals have also been reviewed at length. Available reports of international organizations and other information i.e., speeches and writings have also been included.

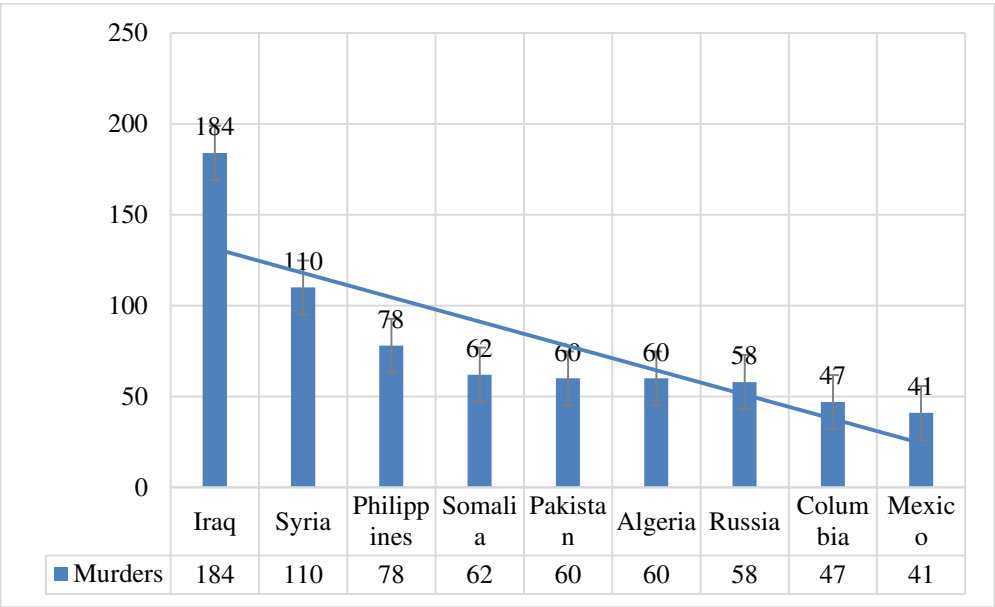
4. Data Analysis

4.1 Violence Reported Against Media Persons in the world especially Pakistan

Since 1992 till 2017, 1277 journalists have been killed due to one reason or the other (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2017). This towering number was

found as an indicative of the fact that how much exposed to threat to life, the media practitioners were in Pakistan

Figure 1: Deadliest Countries of the Globe in 2017



The Figure 1 shows that Iraq was the most dangerous country where 184 journalists were murdered, Syria with 110, Philippines 78, Somalia 62, Pakistan 60, Algeria 60, Russia 58, Columbia 47 and Mexico 41. Pakistan was considered the 5th most dangerous country for journalists across the globe.

Table 1: Beat-wise killed in the world Since 1992

Sr.No.	Coverage	Murdered	Remarks
1	Politics	579	May add up to more than displayed totals because more than one category may apply in some cases.
2	Corruption	243	
3	War	519	
4	Crime	197	
5	Human Rights	263	
6	Culture	143	
7	Business	54	
8	Sports	30	

The total casualties faced by media persons are mostly from the one covering politics and war and least are of business and sports (Committee for Protection of Journalists, 2018).

Table 2:Journalists killed while working on Dangerous Assignment.

S.No.	Country	Murders	S.No.	Country	Murders
1	Pakistan	24	6	Russia	8
2	India	13	7	Afghanistan	7
3	Iraq	9	8	Somalia	6
4	Egypt	8	9	Sri Lanka	5
5	Syria	8	May add up to more than displayed totals because more than one category may apply in some cases.		

Some 156 working journalists were killed and Pakistan is at 9th deadliest country in the world ranking where journalists were deliberately murdered and the motive was confirmed.

Table 3:Journalists killed in Cross Fire/Combat

S.No.	Country	Murders	S.No	Country	Murders
1	Syria	84	6	Afghanistan	12
2	Iraq	64	7	Yemen	12
3	Israel	14	8	Russia	12
4	Somalia	13	9	Libya	8
5	Bosnia	13	May add up to more than displayed totals because more than one category may apply in some cases.		

Some 282 working journalists were killed in the world ranking while performing official duties in combat zone/in cross fire.

Table 4:Job-wise Most Vulnerable Journalists in the World

S.No.	Job	Murdered
1	Print Reporter	337
2	Broadcast Reporter	320
3	Editor	189
4	Columnist / Commentator	99
5	Photographer	140

6	Publisher / Owner	52
7	Producer	66
8	Internet Reporter	78
9	Camera Operator	201
10	Technician	20
11	Columnist/Commentator	101

Careful perusal of murdered journalists around the globe revealed the print reporters with 337 deaths followed by broadcaster reporters with 320 casualties and 201 camera operators were found the most unfortunate in the field. Details are as under; -

Table5: Nationality wise and Gender-wise Deaths of Journalists - Local or Foreigners.

Sr. No.	Ethnicity	Murdered	Gender	Murdered	Medium	Murdered
1	Local	1097	Male	1164	Print	604
2	Foreign	152	Female	85	Television and Internet	813

The victims of bullets in this category are mostly from print media 604 and TV & Internet 813; 1164 were males, 85 were females, 1097 were local and 152 journalists were with foreign origin.

4.2 Violence Reported against Media Persons in Pakistan

4.2.1 Journalists Killed in Pakistan since 1992

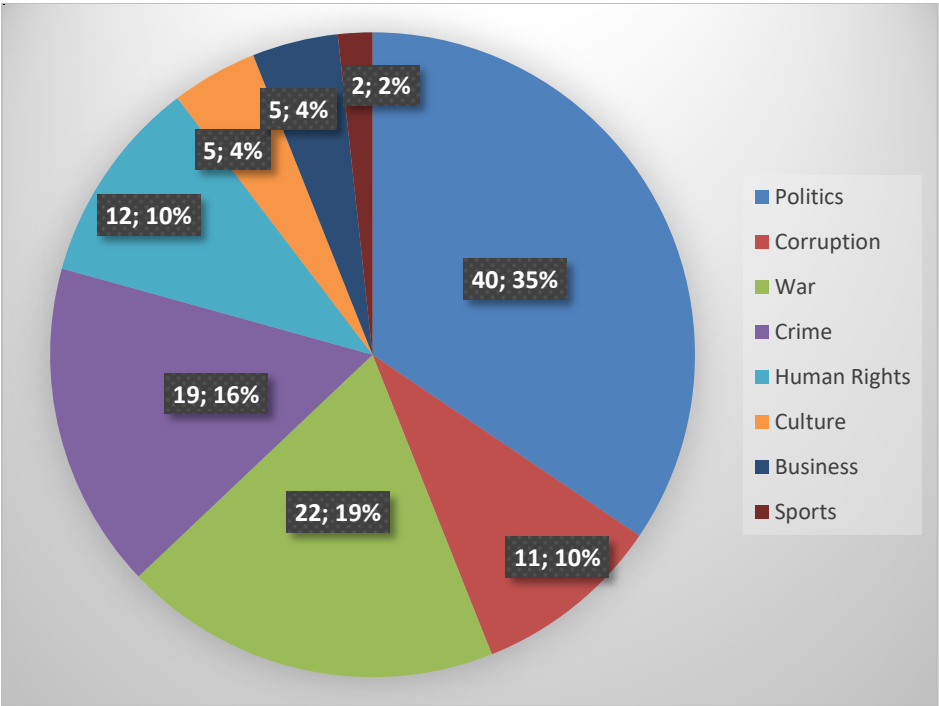
Committee for Protection of Journalists has ranked Pakistan 9th most dangerous country where 33 journalists with confirmed motive and 30 where motive is not confirmed have been murdered. With 60 journalists dead and scores of abducted, injured and threatened to life; its 5th most dangerous country for the working journalists. The chronological order in which media practitioners were murdered is as under:-

Table 6: Journalists Killed in Pakistan since 1992

Sr.No.	Year	Motive		Total
		Confirmed	Unconfirmed	
1	1992	0	0	0
2	1993	0	0	0

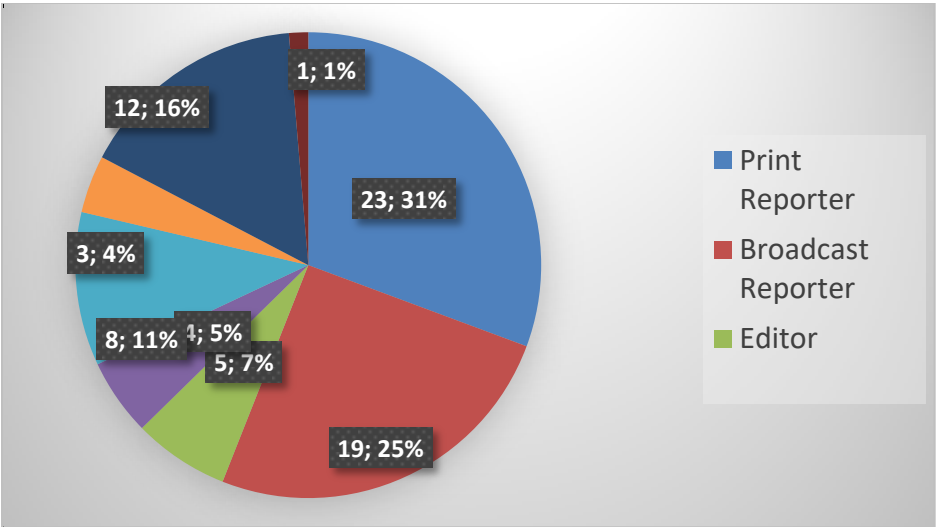
3	1994	2	0	2
4	1995	0	0	0
5	1996	0	0	0
6	1997	1	0	1
7	1998	0	1	1
8	1999	0	1	1
9	2000	1	0	1
10	2001	0	1	1
11	2002	2	0	2
12	2003	1	0	1
13	2004	1	0	1
14	2005	2	0	2
15	2006	2	1	3
16	2007	5	0	5
17	2008	5	1	6
18	2009	5	3	8
19	2010	9	2	11
20	2011	7	4	11
21	2012	8	1	9
22	2013	5	3	8
23	2014	6	1	7
24	2015	2	0	2
25	2016	2	1	3
26	2017	1	2	3

Figure 2:Journalists Murdered in Pakistan since 1992 – Beat Wise



In Pakistan, the victims are those who were covering politics 40, war effected areas 22 and crime and criminals 19. The trend shows that 70% of casualties are covered by the field of politics, war and crime out of total 8 fields.

Figure 3:Job Wise Most Effected Field Since 1992



Print media reporters, Broadcast reporters and Camera operators are the three main effected fields. It is beyond any shadow of doubt that field worker is exposed to the job hazards on one pretext or the other as 72% have been dead. Accordingly, print media was found at the top of the list with 33 murders followed by television with 30 murders. Similarly, 16 journalists were killed as a result of threats initiated before targeting them. Also, 8 journalists were subjected to severe torture before killing them.

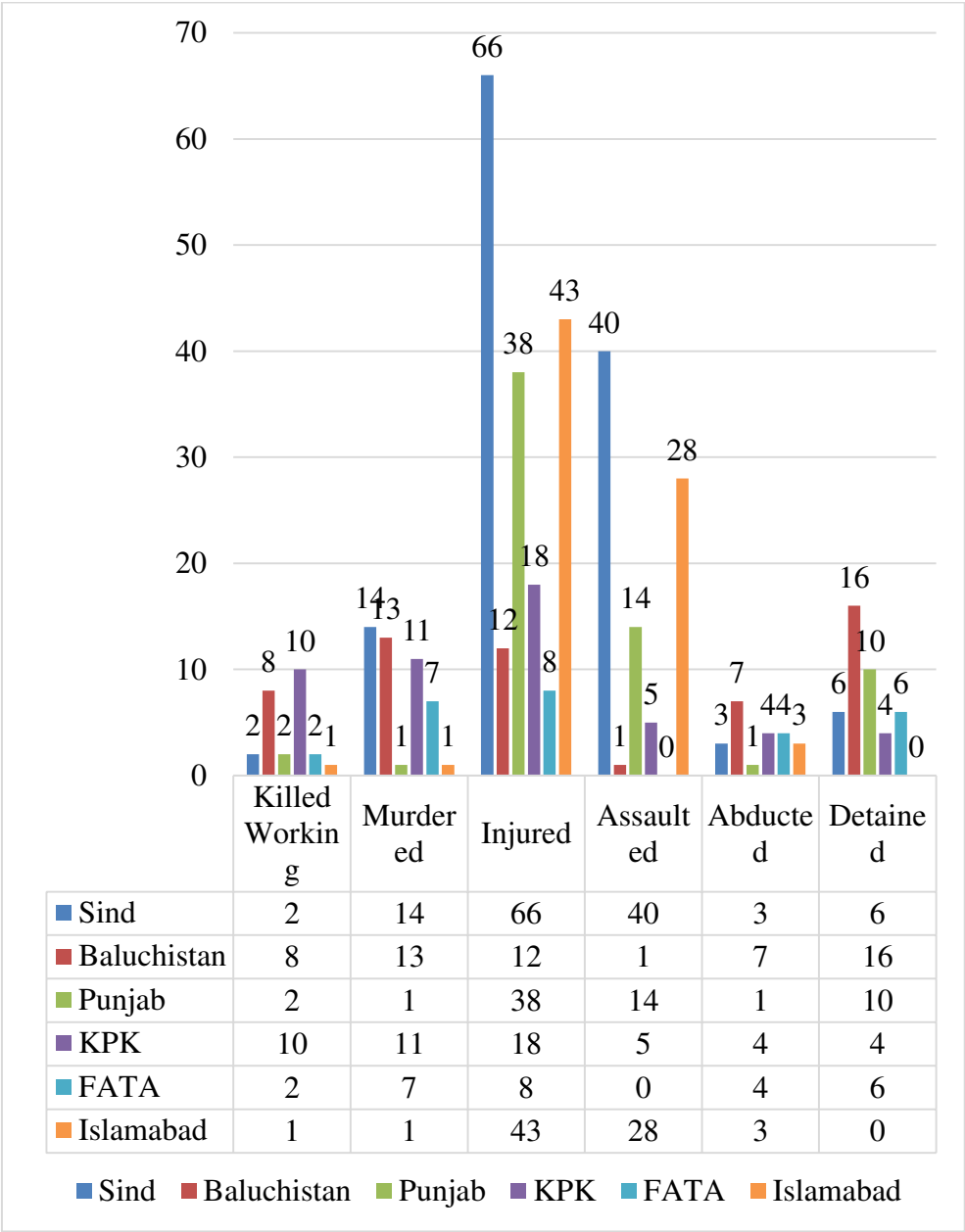
4.4 Attacks on Media Persons/Media Houses 2001 – 2016

Pakistan Press Foundation, according to research claims that 71 journalists and media workers have been killed in the line of professional duty. Deliberate cold blooded murder of 47 was executed to deter others and also to teach lesson to those who did not follow the dictates of interest groups. Remaining 24 were targeted not as specific but they shed their blood while working in active combat zone or covering dangerous assignments. Conviction has however been effected only in two cases and in rest of 69 criminals are roaming around with complete impunity. Details of violence against media since 2001 are given below (Report on safety of media persons, 2016).

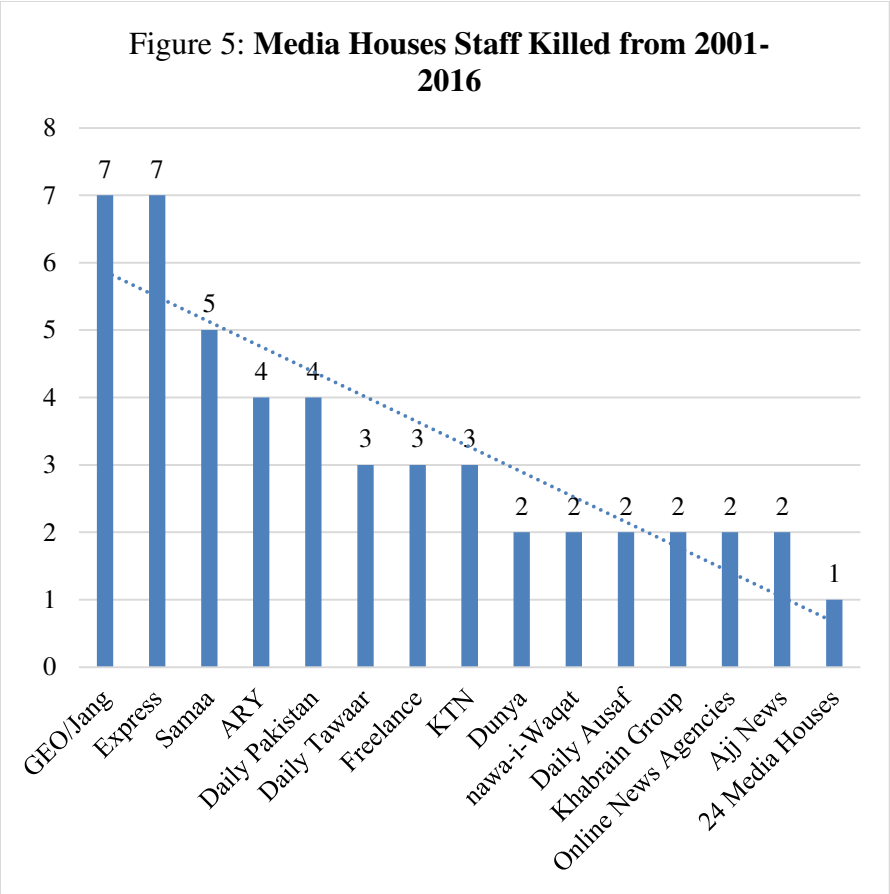
Table 7: Attacks on Media Persons/Media Houses 2001 – 2016

Sr.No.	Year	Killed Working	Murdered	Injured	Assaulted	Abducted	Detained	Total
1	2001	0	0	4	0	0	2	6
2	2002	0	2	3	0	1	1	7
3	2003	0	2	0	0	1	10	13
4	2004	0	1	3	1	1	2	8
5	2005	1	2	5	0	1	4	13
6	2006	1	2	14	3	2	5	27
7	2007	3	3	6	43	0	0	55
8	2008	1	5	11	2	4	2	25
9	2009	2	3	14	4	5	5	33
10	2010	8	5	15	7	2	5	42
11	2011	2	4	10	0	2	0	18
12	2012	2	5	25	3	1	0	36
13	2013	4	5	12	0	1	0	22
14	2014	0	7	41	6	0	2	56
15	2015	0	1	1	19	0	2	23
16	2016	1	0	21	0	1	2	25
Total		25	47	185	88	22	42	409

Figure 4: Province Wise Details of Media Casualties from 2001 to 2016



In order to determine that which particular province is more effected and most dangerous with regards to media working, details of province wise casualties faced by media persons is as under:-



Media houses staff representing media houses, victims of freedom of speech from the period mentioned above was found (Foundation, 2017).

Table 8: Media Groups with Media Persons killed from 2001 to 2016

Media Group	Killed	Media Group	Killed
Aaj News	2	Daily Pakistan	4
AbbTakk TV	1	Daily Shumal	1
ARY News	4	Daily Sindhu	1
Asia Times Online	1	Daily Tawaar	3
City-42 TV	1	Daily Ummat	1
Daily AajKal	1	Dawn Media Group	1
Daily Akhbar-e-Khyber	1	Dharti TV	1
Daily Ausaf	2	Dunya News	2

Daily AwamiInqilab	1	Express Group	7
Daily Azadi	1	Freelance	3
Daily Balochistan Times	1	Frontier Post	1
Daily Intikhab	1	Jang Group of Companies	7
Daily Markaz	1	Karak Times	1
Daily Mashriq	1	Kawish and KTN Group	3
Khyber TV	1	Khabrain Group	2
Nawa-i-Waqt Group	2	Royal TV	1
NNI News Agency	1	Samaa TV	5
Online news agency	2	Shamshad TV	1
The Wall Street Journal	1	VASH TV	1
Total			72

A report says 72 journalists were killed during the course of duty in different areas of Pakistan. The list with names is not available with any of organization except updated by India about Terrorism in South Asia Portal (Foundation, 2017).

5. Findings and Conclusion

Surrounded by the shrieks of bullets and enveloped by the threats to life and property; journalists are performing their day to day duties. Amid suicidal blasts, IEDs, target killings stone pelting and assaults on the DSNGs, event covering journalists, irrespective of gender, journalists are fearlessly seen on the streets of insurgency ridden FATA and Baluchistan. Pressures are tremendous and multifaceted both conventional and unconventional, emerging from state and non-state actors in the shape of contempt of court, treason charges, direct threats from criminals, miscreants, extremists, state machinery and in cases practical manifestation of the same with complete impunity has been witnessed. The ugly situation and grim scenario has brought Pakistan to 5th most dangerous country of the world with regard to journalists and media persons (Shah, 2013). Constant and continuous threat to media persons and media houses is reality in Pakistan. The threats are real and are being materialized too by various interest groups i.e. Taliban, militants, terrorists, politicians, criminals, religious, ethnic, intelligence agencies, state machinery and media owners targeting not only the life and property of working journalists but also their families too. The common conjecture is that sharp increase in the crime against media was witnessed during the first decade of 21st century after Pakistan becoming active partner of war on terror.

5.1 Recommendations

The recommendations based on the previous literature, findings and conclusions are appended below.

5.2 Security of Media Houses

Basic recommendations for media houses to adopt minimum safety standards for the security of working journalists in the field as well as in office are:-

1. Purpose built infrastructure should be developed with stand active threat against VBIED, IED, multiple and multi-directional attacks.
2. Building of media houses should be inspected by composite team of security experts on behest of the government and media house should only be allowed to function after obtaining satisfactory certificate of minimum safety.
3. Regular security survey and up gradation of security equipment should be done on quarterly basis by the team.
4. Recommendations of the team should be made binding onto the owners of the media houses.

4.3 Security of Media Persons

Following few recommendations are to be implemented for the journalists working in the fields:-

1. SOP regarding field duty be developed by the government through team of experts.
2. The minimum safety equipment should be provided to journalists by the employer.
3. Special teams to monitor regularly as per the dictates of the situation and threat envisioned.
4. Special training to be imparted to the journalists by qualified police staff regarding use of cover, protection techniques during indiscriminate firing or in violent mob/crowd etc.

Refresher courses to be done at quarterly basis covering security aspects.

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