

Special Report on Media Security
by the Standing Committee of
National Assembly on Information,
Broadcasting & National Heritage

MEDIA SECURITY IN PAKISTAN

We the members of the Standing Committee of Information, Broadcasting and Heritage unanimously submit the following recommendations to the Speaker National Assembly as per ‘Special Report’ Rule 234 of Rules of Procedure and to the Executive.

This is the third such meeting and a mid status report is being given by the Main Committee. The Sub-committee formed on this critical issue of Security for media will be ongoing till all its terms of references have been duly addressed.

Pakistan’s international standing and the current law and order situation in Pakistan demand that the following recommendations are implemented at top priority by the Executive branch:

- i. We condemn the attack on Raza Rumi and those present with him at the time, and on all the hundreds of media personnel before him by terrorists and enemies of Pakistan. We stand united against all such terrorists. We take strict notice on why Punjab police despite notification was not present to give the update on these cases and a notice will be sent to them on same. IG Punjab must give a mid status if not a full investigation report confidentially to the Standing committee within 24 hours.
- ii. The security of media in Pakistan is the responsibility of the state, the Executive branch and Parliament. We intend ensuring that any issues related to the security of media are handled on top priority so that they can function without fear and deliver on their mission of delivering highest levels of media freedom and quality to the people of Pakistan.
- iii. We accept that media as well as the rest of Pakistan is functioning in a law and order situation which has Target Killings, abductions, Sectarian Killings, Crossfire, bomb attacks, Terrorist suicide bombings, Abduction for ransom or political gain.
- iv. Media in particular faces two threats. One when they follow stories in the middle of the fire and secondly when the fire is brought to them by the terrorists.
- v. We have been informed by the government that the compensation for those media personnel hurt or martyred in the line of fire will be standardized across all provinces. The Committee ensures following up on all such cases where this is not conducted as per the Executive’s commitment.
- vi. We have been informed by the government that a Special Prosecutor will be inducted to fast track investigations.

- vii. All lists of targeted media personnel needs to be taken seriously by the Executive branch because now we have seen action by terrorists on these lists as well as the fact that we have recorded threats to some of those on this list by the terrorists outfits.
- viii. We expect that there will be better coordination between Ministry of Interior and media, on intelligence chatter on targeting of media personnel so that media is better protected.
- ix. All IGs must immediately inform standing committee of hotlines assigned for media personnel in case of emergencies. As informed by Ministry and Minister of Information they have a commitment to media on this and thus special hotlines will be established by April 8 and we expect an update on the same.
- x. Bullet proof vests must be provided to all journalists in the line of duty.
- xi. Special arrangements at all media houses must be undertaken by government to ensure top level security.
- xii. Scanners must be installed by government at all media houses.
- xiii. All open investigations must be closed within 3month period and full compensations paid in each province. Every Single attack on media must be fully investigated and details tabled in the Parliament on monthly basis, which should also be made public with the permission of the concerned media persons, organization. The names of the groups involved in such attacks must be made public and their masterminds and foot soldiers are taken to task, with full public identification, no cover up for any group.
- xiv. A 24/7 cell in the Ministry of Interior to process such intelligence intercepts and share with the concerned persons to ensure security.
- xv. Cabinet Committee on Media Freedom & Security, with mandatory twice monthly meetings or even more if such attacks continue to discuss the matter threadbare in the presence of senior journalists.
- xvi. A focal person of the level of Minister of State, which could be immediate approached for help.
- xvii. Provision of light arms for personal protection may also be considered.
- xviii. Criteria maybe determined to have A, B or C level of security for different media

persons, organizations based on the threat level s per intelligence intercepts.

- xix. Media bodies and organizations must provide Standing committee a complete comprehensive security plan for all media personnel working for them including any equipment and security infrastructure.
- xx. The protocol of communication on the subject of sensitive national security for media houses should be developed by the Cabinet Media Security Committee and should be part of national narrative of NISP and cyber-crime bill.
- xxi. We have been informed by the Executive branch that Life Insurance is being given by government for all media personnel. We as committee will ensure that this is the case and be willing to listen to any public petitions where this is not the case. This is one area where the state and the media groups have to accept the responsibility. If a media persons is injured, killed, there should be some defined mechanism
 - a. to cover the costs of his treatment
 - b. in case of his death, some cash benefits for the family
 - c. education of his children

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The IGP Punjab has added the following:

"Various investigation leads are being followed in respect of attack on Mr Raza Rumi. Few suspects are being questioned who have involved in similar offences, checking of movement of other suspects & geo-fencing of the area is also underway, forensic evidence is being analysed, hopefully case will be worked out soon.

Regards"