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<http://www.rsf.org/pakistan-gunmen-torch-cable-tv-operator-22-07-2014,46678.html>

Asia - Pakistan

Arson attack

Gunmen torch cable TV operator that carried Geo News

22 July 2014

Intimidation is being used to deter operators from resuming transmission of embattled TV news channel

Reporters Without Borders condemns the use of intimidation and violence as a new way to silence the embattled TV news station *Geo News* after unidentified gunmen torched cable TV operator WorldCall's premises in the southern city of Karachi on 19 July.

WorldCall had only recently resumed transmission of *Geo News*, which a government agency suspended for 15 days last month.

Police and witnesses said between four and six gunmen stormed into WorldCall's offices, disarmed security guards, ordered employees to leave and then set fire to the place. The blaze gutted the premises but caused no injuries. It also interrupted transmission of *Geo News* in several parts of the city.

"This attack was an illegal act of censorship and an unacceptable act of intimidation of cable TV operators, who play a key role in freedom of information," said Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"Cable TV operators have already been the [victims of intimidation](#) in the past and now a new threat is hanging over them. The Pakistani authorities have a duty to take this threat seriously and adopt measures to protect them."

WorldCall had received threats and had reported them to the police but no special measures were taken to protect the company.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) [suspended Geo News for 15 days](#) on 6 June after it broadcast claims by its leading anchor, **Hamid Mir**, that the intelligence agencies were behind the shooting attack in which he was badly injured on 19 April.

Although the 15-day suspension ended a month ago, *Geo News* still cannot be seen in many parts of Pakistan because threats are deterring cable TV operators from restoring it to the range of channels they offer. On 18 July, for example, an attempt was made to set fire to a cable TV operator in Rahimyar Khan, in the eastern province of Punjab.

Pakistan is ranked 158th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).
