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Asia - Pakistan

Harassment

Authorities urged to protect TV journalist targeted by militant threats

3 February 2014

Geo News TV news director **Ansar Ali Naqvi** has been the target of a campaign of threats by the Islamist militant group Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) since 31 January because he failed to provide live coverage of one of its meetings in Karachi, preferring to broadcast former President Pervez Musharraf's trial.

"We urge the authorities to provide Naqvi with protection without delay, and we call on *Geo News* to do everything possible to ensure that he is safe," said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"We firmly condemn ASWJ's campaign of intimidation. Trying to make a news organization cover one event rather than another constitutes an attack on freedom of information. These actions must stop, and a thorough investigation must be carried out to identify those responsible."

Naqvi told Reporters Without Borders he received a threatening call from ASWJ spokesman Akber Saeedi on the evening of 31 January trying to get *Geo News* to break away from the Musharraf trial to cover his organization's meeting. Naqvi refused, pointing out that banner text across the foot of the screen was providing information about ASWJ's meeting.

Regarding Naqvi's refusal as an insult, ASWJ's leaders posted his name and phone number on social networks along with calls for reprisals. As a result, he received hundreds of SMS texts threatening him and his family.

A few minutes after Saeedi and Naqvi spoke by phone, the *Geo News* Karachi bureau chief notified Naqvi that shots had been fired at the *Geo News* crew attending the ASWJ meeting and that the journalists had fled.

► > See the [video](#) of the meeting

Naqvi has asked social networks to remove his contact details, which were posted without his permission. "I think I was targeted because of my profession as a journalist but also because I am Shiite," he said. ASWJ is known in Pakistan for its hostility towards the Shiite community.

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