

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/pakistan-acts-of-intimidation-against-two-01-08-2011,40724.html>

Asia - Pakistan

Spate of attacks

Acts of intimidation against two Karachi-based TV journalists in past 10 days

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Reporters Without Borders is disturbed by an increase in threats and acts of intimidation against journalists in the southwestern port city of Karachi. Two TV reporters, **Syed Shahryar Asim** of [Aaj TV](#) and **Malik Munawar** of [Channel 5](#), have been attacked in connection with their work in the past 10 days alone.

"We urge the authorities to break the cycle of violence and impunity by investigating both of these cases thoroughly, and we remind them that the safety of journalists must be guaranteed if any democracy is to be able to function properly," Reporters Without Borders said. "In response to the endless violence against journalists and media, we are awaiting a sign that the government has the political will to end impunity. Without this, there can be no media freedom and independence.

"The many dangers for journalists include organized crime, reprisals by radical groups, the risk of bombings and violence by the security forces and powerful local officials. Seven journalists have been killed in Pakistan since the start of this year. Last year, there were 11 murders of journalists in which there was a clearly established link to the victim's work."

Asim was the target of a shooting attack at around 8:30 a.m. on 27 July. He had just left his home in his car with his brother when two gunmen on a motorcycle tried to block their way and opened fire on the car. Neither was hit. When Asim returned home, an anonymous phone caller told him: "The next time the shots will be aimed at your chest, not the car."

Asim told Reporters Without Borders the next day: "It is clear that this attack was a reaction to my TV programme 'Target,' which is about organized crime in our region."

Munawar was kidnapped by unidentified persons on 21 July, after asking a local politician "undesirable questions" about the leader of another party currently in prison. He reappeared two days later in Hub, in the neighbouring province of Balochistan. For fear of reprisals, he refused to give Reporters Without Borders any details about his abductors or the treatment he received while held.

Reporters Without Borders has also learned that Express News TV bureau chief **Sherin Zada** was attacked by soldiers while covering a demonstration in Kalam, in the northern Swat district, on 26 July.

Ranked 151st out of 178 countries in the 2010 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index, Pakistan is one of the deadliest and most dangerous countries in the world for journalists.
