

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/pakistan-slain-journalist-s-associates-say-26-07-2011,40691.html>

Asia - Pakistan

Abandoned witnesses

Slain journalist's associates say murder investigation has ground to halt

26 July 2011

Two close associates of **Syed Saleem Shahzad**, an Islamabad-based investigative reporter for the [Asia Times](#) online newspaper [whose dead body was found](#) in Punjab province on 31 May, have given interviews to Reporters Without Borders in which they accuse the authorities of showing little interest in investigating his murder.

"We voice our support for Shahzad's relatives and colleagues and we urge the authorities to guarantee their safety," Reporters Without Borders said. "Several of them feel abandoned amid judicial proceedings that are not without risk for witnesses. The authorities cannot leave them without protection. The current foot-dragging in the investigation must end at once and everything must be done to shed light on this murder."

Shahzad's friend and colleague **Muhammad Faizan** and his brother-in-law **Hamza Ameer** spoke to Reporters Without Borders about the climate of intimidation to which they are exposed and their belief that the murder investigation has ground to a halt.

Interviewed on 22 July, Faizan said unidentified individuals tried to enter his home while he was at the morgue to identify Shahzad's body. Fortunately, his wife was able to chase them away, he said, adding that he regarded the intrusion as an attempt to intimidate him.

[REDACTED]

Ameer, who was interviewed on 20 July, said he was concerned about rumours that are tarnishing Shahzad's image, portraying him as a "secret agent" in the pay of foreign countries and accusing him of maintaining close relations with the Taliban. "We want his name and his work to be respected by the government and public, because he died in the cause of his profession."

[REDACTED]

Ameer also condemned "the lack of coordination" between the Islamabad police and the team investigating in the Punjab region where Shazad's body was found.

[REDACTED]

[Pakistan was the world's deadliest country for journalists in 2010](#) with a total of 11 killed in connection with their work. Seven journalists have been killed in Pakistan since the start of this year.
