

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/pakistan-journalist-receives-death-threat-24-11-2011,41463.html>

Asia - Pakistan

Risk of reprisals

## Journalist receives death threat after "memogate" stories

24 November 2011

Reporters Without Borders is concerned by a telephone death threat received three days ago by **Mohammad Malick**, editor of the Pakistani daily *The News International*, from a blocked number.

The threat followed his newspaper's prominent coverage of the so-called "[memogate](#)" scandal, which led to the resignation of Pakistan's ambassador to the United States this week.

"We ask the Pakistani authorities to take the telephone threats against Mohammad Malick seriously and to pay attention to his safety in the coming weeks," the press freedom organization said.

"We do not want to see another tragedy like the kidnapping and murder of [Saleem Shahzad](#)."

The body of Shahzad, an investigative reporter who wrote about Islamic militants and Al-Qaeda for the *Asia Times* online newspaper, was found in Punjab province on 31 May 48 hours after he went missing.

"The climate of insecurity surrounding journalists in the country continues while nothing is done to bring it to an end. The government must respond urgently, first by ensuring that the continual attacks on media workers do not go unpunished. If the perpetrators of the crimes and those behind them are not brought to justice, self-censorship by journalists, already widespread, will become standard practice," Reporters Without Borders continued.

Malick, contacted by Reporters Without Borders, quoted the caller as saying: "You are driving fast ... and be careful as you may have accident," adding: "I am telling you, better to think."

The caller went on to warn the Rawalpindi-based journalist of serious repercussions if he continued to follow the "memogate" story.

Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani, resigned on Tuesday after it emerged that he had allegedly written a memo to the U.S. government asking for Washington's help in controlling the Pakistani army.

Malick believed the threats came from one of Pakistan's intelligence agencies and resulted from his coverage of the scandal via his newspaper and on the television station *Geo News TV*.

"I have also confronted such situation in the past ... and did not take it seriously. But this time I thought better I let my friends know," the editor said. "When I was to leave home for a function at the British High Commission the same day I found a white-colour Corolla car waiting outside my residence and it chased me for some 1,000 yards. The next morning, the same car was waiting again outside my home."

He did not name the agency or organization behind the call and the car chase, saying only: "Everybody knows who is it doing and why."

Reporters Without Borders appeals to the Pakistani authorities to publish the results of the inquiry into the murder of [Hayatullah Khan](#), a correspondent for the dailies *Nation* and *Ausaf* and photographer for the *European Pressphoto Agency*, found dead in June 2006 near Mir Ali, in the Tribal Area of North Waziristan.

The government has a duty to disclose the [inquiry's findings](#). His family has been waiting for more than five years for light to be shed on the matter. The organization invites the information minister, Firdous Ashiq Awan, to take action as soon as possible to publish its report and to demonstrate the willingness of the government to ensure those who carry out attacks on journalists do not go unpunished.

Khan was [kidnapped](#) in the Tribal Area on 5 December 2005. On 16 November 2007, [his widow](#), a teacher, was killed by a bomb placed near the bedroom wall of her home. The couple had five [children](#), at the time aged between 2 and 10.

Pakistan is the deadliest country in the world for media workers. So far this year at least eight journalists have been killed because of their professional activities. The country is ranked 151st of 178 in the [world press freedom index](#) compiled by Reporters Without Borders in 2010.

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