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Asia - Pakistan

Police protection

Taliban turn their sights on news media

18 October 2012

As Taliban angered by the coverage of last week's [shooting of the young blogger Malala Yousafzai](#) continue to threaten national and international media, Reporters Without Borders has had access to confidential documents about the concrete measures that have been taken to alert and protect journalists in danger.

According to [the BBC](#), Hakimullah Mehsud, the head of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), ordered subordinates to target news media in Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad and other cities. The media that criticized the schoolgirl blogger's shooting are being targeted in particular.

Reporters Without Borders hails the speed with which the Pakistani police have reacted and their efforts to guarantee the safety of journalists targeted by the Taliban. At the same time, it condemns the death threats being made against journalists, which have the sole aim of creating a climate of terror in order to silence dissent.

"Even if Malala Yousafzai's prognosis continues to be uncertain, the media's coverage of the attempt to murder this young activist and the developments in her state of health is essential," Reporters Without Borders said. "Freedom of information must be respected and the Taliban threats must not serve as a spearhead for the imposition of self-censorship."

The organization is also relieved to learn that Yousafzai has been transferred to a hospital in the British city of Birmingham and that she is responding well to treatment there.

The Pakistan interior ministry has stepped up security around media offices and religious schools that spoke out about the attack on Yousafzai.

At the same time, the authorities are conducting an investigation with the aim of identifying those responsible for the Yousafzai shooting, which has been claimed by the TTP.

Pakistan is ranked 151st out of 179 countries in [the 2011/2012 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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