

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/pakistan-thugs-kill-balochi-journalist-16-08-2011,40795.html>

Asia - Pakistan

## Reporter murdered Thugs kill Baloch journalist

16 August 2011

Reporters Without Borders called today for a thorough investigation into the murder on 14 August of reporter **Munir Ahmed Shakir**, of the news agency *Online*, by thugs after he had covered a demonstration by Balochi nationalists in the Khuzdar district (southeast of Quetta) in the Pakistani province of Balochistan.

The agency's bureau chief in Quetta, Irshad Mastoi, said the killing was linked to his work and that he had checked that no personal or family feuds were involved. No group claimed responsibility, but the Baloch Armed Defence Army (BADA) has openly threatened journalists covering meetings and political activities of Balochi nationalists.

Mastoi said journalism in Baluchistan was becoming "*an endangered profession*" since nationalists threatened reporters covering government activities and groups such as BADA threatened those reporting on the nationalists.

Reporters Without Borders appealed for punishment of Shakir's killers and those behind them so as to break the cycle of impunity crippling journalists in Balochistan which has led to self-censorship in the region (see [interview with an anonymous Balochi journalist](#)).

Shakir, 43, was shot dead on his way home after covering a nationalist demonstration to mark Pakistani's independence day. The attackers fled and the journalist died soon after being taken to Khuzdar hospital. He had been a reporter for 10 years and is the seventh journalist killed in Balochistan, apparently because of his work, since the start of 2010.

Others included [Faiz Muhammad Sasoli](#) (killed on 27 June 2010), [Abdul Hameed Hayatan](#) (18 November 2010) and [Muhammad Khan Sasoli](#) (14 December 2010).

Investigations into these killings have produced no arrests or prosecutions.

Reporters Without Borders also expressed concern today about the fate of journalist **Rehmatullah Darpakhel**, who was kidnapped on 11 August in North Waziristan.

"The region is a stronghold of several armed groups and it is hard to know who is behind the kidnapping," the worldwide press freedom organisation said. "The central government must do all it can to find him as soon as possible. It is unacceptable that local journalists have to do the job of the police and investigate on their own using their contacts."

Darpakhel, 45, of the Urdu-language daily [Ausaf](#) and [Aaj TV](#) in Miranshah (Khuzdar district), was seized by armed men as he left the Miranshah Press Club and crossed the town market. A friend who was with him said they were attacked by men in two vehicles with dark-tinted windows who fired in the air to discourage any resistance.

Syed Haleem, chairman of the Tribal Union of Journalists in North Waziristan, told Reporters Without Borders he was worried about Darpakhel and described what local journalists had done to find him.

One journalist said the kidnapping was part of the threats to the media in the sensitive region of the country. "*We already lost a colleague, **Hayatullah Khan**, who was kidnapped in similar circumstances in 2006,*" he said.

Pakistan is the world's deadliest country for journalists so far this year, with [eight murdered](#).

