



During May 2017 – April 30, 2018, the situation of the free press, freedom of expression and enforced disappearances further deteriorated in Pakistan. Islamists made a strong comeback in the disguise of “political parties” and arbitrarily targeted free press, freedom of expression, and minorities. Not only the Islamists but the law enforcement agencies (LEAs), state, vigilantes, and judiciary, were stayed hostile against free media. Blasphemy laws were widely and randomly used to crush political opponents, silence the media and target the minorities to settle personal enmities.

**Five journalists, Haroon Khan, a reporter for Waqt TV & Akhbar-i-Khaiber, Bakhshish Ahmad, Bureau Chief of Daily K2 Times, Abdul Razzaque, ARY News Chunian correspondent, Anjum Muneer Raja, the sub-editor of the Urdu newspaper Qaumi Pukaar and Zeeshan Butt, a reporter for the Nawa-i-Waqat, were killed and at least three people murdered over blasphemy allegations.**

Three Muslims and non-Muslims were killed, nine injured, arrested or booked for alleged blasphemy; one of them sentenced to death in Lahore.

At least 12 journalists, including a female reporter Saba Bajeer, was assaulted by the LEAs and unidentified men. In November 2017, anti-blasphemy Islamists burned down Dawn News DSNG van and injured technician Hassan Mateen and two Geo News journalists Talha Hashmi and Tariq Abul Hasan in Karachi and Islamabad and in October 2017, unidentified men stabbed The News journalist Ahmed Noorani and his driver in Islamabad.

*Scroll down to read the details and chronology.*

Amid worsening situation and increased censorship, more than 50 journalists have signed a petition against the assaults on the free press. The petition has been started by journalist Beena Sarwar, a seasoned journalist and avid advocate of a free press in Pakistan.

In October 2017, banned Baloch separatist United Baloch Army (UBA) and Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) made direct threats to the media and journalists of dire consequences of what they believed for being anti-Baloch press. The Baloch separatists have blocked the newspaper’s delivery to many parts of Balochistan depriving poverty ridden people the access to the news as the internet usage percentage is also meager in this volatile province.

## **ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES**

**Enforced disappearances made a rampant return in early 2017; journalists, political workers, Baloch activists, social media activists, bloggers, Sindhi nationalists, Pashtuns, Urdu speaking activists, social media activists, minorities, and civilians were indiscriminately disappeared or kidnapped.**

Some of the “disappeared” journalists including female Zeenat Shahzadi, returned homes but fearing the consequences remained silent about their ordeal. Among hundreds of others, unidentified and police uniformed armed men kidnapped a tribal journalist Shah Zaman Mehsud in Tank, South Waziristan, Rafaqat Jarwar, of Daily Koshish in rural Sindh, Punhal Sario, the leader of the Voice for Missing Persons of Sindh (returned), Ghulam Rassol Burfati, sub-editor of Sindhi language Daily Sindh Express Hyderabad in Jamshoro, Inaam Abbasi, Editor of the Sindhi language Nao Niapo magazine in Karachi, Islam Gul Afridi, of Radio Pakistan and other

websites from Khyber Agency (returned) and Shahnawaz Tarkzai, of Mashal Radio while visiting the media center in Shabqadar (returned).  
*Scroll down to read the details and chronology.*

The Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP) claims that since 2011, more than 1,200 bodies are found whereas the Federal Ministry of Human Rights admits that at least 936 dead bodies have been found in Balochistan. In February 2017, a severely tortured body of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) – Pakistan’s worker Nadeem Khan, was found in Karachi. The family claimed that the deceased was arrested by the law enforcement agencies from his home in Karachi.

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), 110 Sindhi nationalists and human rights activists disappeared between January and August in 2017 while the Sindh Human Rights Defenders (SHRD) reported 123 enforced disappearances in Sindh. Some activists put the numbers as high as 170. There are many cases where many short-term disappearances are not reported fearing the lives of the victims and their families.  
*Scroll down to read the details and chronology.*

## **CENSORSHIP**

While the censorship on free press continued unabated, the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Lahore High Court (LHC) blocked airing the speeches of the ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz for 15 days. The court termed the speeches as “anti-judiciary.” Following the Supreme Court’s ruling banning criticism on the judiciary, Geo News censored Sunday show of the host, Talat Hussain. In April 2018, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issued another warning to TV channels against criticising judiciary and military. Under tremendous pressure from the government, Journalists Mosharraf Zaidi, Babar Sattar, and Khan Zaman Kakar’s articles about the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) were censored and Geo News, the largest television network pulled off air.  
*Scroll down to read the details and chronology.*

## **FAKE NEWS**

Unfortunately, the culture of fake news enormously widened and systematically fostered by some channels and, social media – and by some of the very popular anchors. Fake news planted to brand Pakhtoon Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) as “foreign engineered” - later, military hinted to listen to their demands.

A very insensitive example of sensationalized news was the shocking rape and murder of a minor girl in Kasur, Punjab in January 2018. Shamefully, media did not respect the privacy of the victims and her family but used the tragedy to gain ratings with the bold labels of “breaking news,” using non-journalistic language and judgments to the extent that making the victims and her family somehow responsible for the tragedy. One of the senior anchorpersons went to the length of leveling unfounded and unrelated allegations against the suspect and boasted to be hanged if his claims proved to be wrong – proven fabricated later, the Supreme Court of Pakistan banned the disgraced anchor for three months from hosting his show on TV channel NewsOne.

In April 2018, TV channel the Express News ran a fake story of banning the Urdu language in all campuses of the Sindh University. The story could deepen the segregation and exclusion of highly divided urban and the rural population of Sindh. Many lives have been lost over the years because of the lingual division in Sindh.

In December 2017, a private news channel, Bol TV started a vindictive campaign against lawyer and human rights activist Jibran Nasir, alleging him of blasphemy. Mr. Jibran was instrumental for the befitting sentencing for Shahrukh Jatui, a highly politically connected man who killed a youth Shahzeb.

A malicious campaign was launched against the youngest Nobel Laureate Malala Yousuzai during her visit to Pakistan in March 2018, downplaying her role in girl's education and denying the fact that she was shot by Taliban.

Infiltration of the government employees and the dependence of the political parties on gangs and religious seminaries making the political parties side with those demanding extended blasphemy laws and censorship on the free press. According to a list given to the Sindh High Court (SHC), more than 100 media workers are full-time employees of the different ministries in Sindh province alone and an estimated 500 across the country.

The political and religious affiliations, ethnic bigotry and partisanship of media provide misleading information to the foreign press depending on the Pakistani sources for their freedom reports and data on press freedom.

## **LEGAL SCENARIO**

Since the independence of Pakistan in 1947, media has been equally repressed by the military and the elected governments. Different laws such as Press & Publication Ordinance (PPO), Maintenance of Public Order (MPO), Cyber Crime Bill, Section 5 of the Pemra Act and blasphemy laws have arbitrarily been used by the succeeding governments to arrest and kidnap the journalists, strangle free speech and randomly censor the internet access. Recently, the government used infamous MPO to disband Pakhtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) and arrest its activists in different cities of Pakistan.

Cyber Crimes Act and Prevention of Electronic Crime Bill (PECB) grant unchecked powers to the authorities to arrest, spy and convict people. Section 20 of PECB enabling police and individuals to arrest and manipulate the use of the internet. The police have powers to register a case of blasphemy under IT Act 153A, 295 IPC sections 66 based on a screen grab of the social media. The government has reached Facebook, Google and YouTube to block anything blasphemous, satirical and libel according to the government's perception or reveal the source.

In November 2017, a parliamentary committee rejected the government's bill on the safety of journalists terming that the bill is not aligned to the guidelines set by the United Nations (UN) and does not address the safety of the journalists and media workers.

Recently, the Chief Justice of Pakistan insinuated extending contempt of the court ordinance (COCO) 2003 beyond six months to the period, in his words, “until the accused purges himself before the court.” The COCO has been used controversially in the past few months to target a political party and silencing the press.

## **POLITICAL PARTIES ATTACKS AGAINST FREE PRESS AND SUPPORT TO BLASPHEMY LAWS**

**All three major political parties; the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) conspired with the religious groups which have been calling for Sharia laws and involved in the murders and kidnapping of the journalists, minorities, and activists.**

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its leader, Imran Khan, continued sympathizing and supported the Islamists and never denounced or disassociated from the individuals who killed and assaulted journalists and campaigned against free press and freedom of expression. Imran Khan publicly admits that his workers wanted to join anti-blasphemy clerics at Faizabad. In February 2018, the provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government led by Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced a massive grant of Rs300 million for Darul Uloom Haqqania. The Haqqania seminaries led by infamous Taliban supported Samiul Haq. Both Samiul Haq and his Darul Uloom Haqqania have admitted and commended many suicide attacks and mass murders. The PTI, led by Imran Khan, started funding Darul Uloom Haqqania in 2016 purportedly to win Jihadi voters and showcasing their street power in DHARANAS (sit-ins). Since 2016, the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has given away more than USD five million to Darul Uloom Haqqania. Darul Uloom Haqqania is conspiring to establish Sharia laws in Pakistan – a death to free press and freedom of expression.

In September 2017, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader who is also the opposition leader in the National Assembly, KhursheedShah, threatened SAMAA TV's Sukkur Bureau Chief, Imdad Phulpoto by offering land for the journalist's grave. The politician was trying to dodge the questions about his founded links with land mafia.

In November 2017, Pakistan surrenders to the demands of a newly emerged Islamists group Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLYRA) after they seized capital city of Islamabad and later spread to the other parts of the country. The TLYRA demands included stiffer penalties for blasphemy, the resignation of those sitting Ministers critical of blasphemy laws, fast registration of blasphemy cases, and induction of more religious holidays. Pakistan granted full impunity to the Islamists from their killings, assaults, kidnapping, and torture to the journalists, civilians and the police during their invasion of the capital. The Islamists also attacked the public and the government property and the houses of parliamentarians. Ironically, the government handed cash to the Islamists as a travel allowance to go back to their hometowns. Succumbed to the Islamists demands, The Senate of Pakistan passed amendments in the Elections Act, 2017 defining the status of Muslim minorities including Ahmadi, Qadiani, and Lahori group and expelled them from the joint electoral lists as Muslims.

### **KILLINGS - TIMELINE**

- March 2018, a politician and the chairman of the Begowala union council, Imran Cheema shot and killed newspaper *Nawa-i-Waqt* reporter Zeeshan Butt in Sambrial, Multan. The Politician was angered by the reporter's questions about new taxes.
- March 2018, undefined gunmen shot to death Anjum Muneer Raja, the sub-editor of the Urdu newspaper *Qaumi Pukaar*. Mr. Muneer was killed in a highly guarded high-security zone of Rawalpindi, in the proximity of the Pakistani military's national headquarters (GHQ).
- October 2017, Journalist Haroon Khan, a reporter for Waqt TV & Akhbar-i-Khaiber murdered in Swabi. The family of the slain journalist called this murder related to a land dispute. However, Taliban conflicted the family's account and claimed responsibility for his killing.
- June 2017, print Journalist Bakhshish Ahmad, Bureau Chief of Daily K2 Times, Shot Dead In Haripur - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- May 2017, ARY News' Chunian correspondent Abdul Razzaque was gunned down while another correspondent Muqadar Hussain, was injured in an attempted robbery.

#### **ASSAULTS | ARRESTS | HARASSMENTS - TIMELINE**

- April 2018, unknown gunmen shot fires and attempt to enter the house of the *GeoNews* anchorperson Saleem Safi in capital Islamabad.
- April 2018, unknown individuals conducted a "burglary-style raid" on the house of Maryam Hasan, who is the editor of the annual report on the state of human rights in Pakistan and a consultant for *The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)*. The unidentified men investigated her about her profession and sized her electronic gadgets and valuables.
- March 2018, Anwar Ali Khan Lohar, the father of a former militant commander Zafar Ali Lohar threatened to kill four tribal journalists for *TheNews* in Wana, South Waziristan. The journalists Malik Irfan Burki, Inzamam Burki, Rafi Burki and Kashif Burki, exposed corruption in the local government developmental funds.
- March 2018, police in Pakistan registered a case against former ambassador to the US, Hussain Haqqani, for allegedly expressing *anti-Pakistan* opinions.
- February 2018, Islamabad High Court (IHC) dropped contempt charges against anchorperson Matiullah Jan, who questioned about lawyers involvement in land grabbing scam.
- February 2018, TV anchor Reham Khan, former wife of *Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)* chairman Imran Khan, left Pakistan after receiving threatening calls. She is currently working on an autobiography.
- January 2018, law enforcement agencies (LES) briefly detained the *Express Tribune*'s journalist Fawad Hasan, at the University of Karachi. LEAs accused him of making remarks against them while condoling the death of a university professor.
- January 2018, unidentified men assaulted and attempted to kidnap journalist Taha Siddiqui, a reporter for *France 24* and Pakistan bureau chief of Indian television channel *WION* in Islamabad.
- December 2017, a private news channel, Bol TV, accused lawyer and human rights activist Jibran Nasir of blasphemy.

- December 2017, The Islamabad High Court (IHC) dropped all charges against five bloggers Aamir Liaquat, Sami Ibrahim, Sabir Shakir, Arif Hameed Bhatti, Orya Maqbool Jan and Haroon Rasheed after the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) failure to provide evidence. The incriminated bloggers had to run for their lives and will remain on the hit list of the Islamists vigilantes. The bloggers were accused of committing blasphemy on social media
- November 2017, Pakistan released Khyber News TV correspondent, Khalil Jibrán Afridi after five days detention.
- November 2017, Pakistan surrenders to the demands of newly emerge Islamists group Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY) after they seized capital city of Islamabad and later spread to the other parts of the country. The TLY demands included stiffer penalties over blasphemy, the resignation of those sitting Ministers critical of blasphemy laws, immediate registration of blasphemy cases, and induction of more religious holidays. Pakistan granted full impunity to the Islamists from their killings, assaults, kidnapping, and torture to the journalists and the police. The Islamists also attacked the public and the government property and the houses of parliamentarians. The government also handed cash to the Islamists as a travel allowance to go back to their hometowns.
- November 2017, anti-blasphemy Islamists burned down Dawn News DSNG van and injured technician Hassan Mateen and two Geo News journalists Talha Hashmi and Tariq Abul Hasan in Karachi and Islamabad.
- November 2017, a parliamentary committee rejected the government's bill on the safety of journalists citing that the bill is not aligned to the guidelines set by the United Nations and does not address the safety of the journalists and media workers.
- October 2017, unidentified men stabbed The News journalist Ahmed Noorani and his driver in Islamabad.
- October 2017, blogger Asim Saeed, one of the five activists disappeared in Pakistan in January this year, made torture claims against authorities while in detention. He is now seeking asylum in Britain.
- October 2017, in a Dawn newspaper reports, female Pakistani journalists share stories of harassment at the workplace
- October 2017, The Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) cybercrime wing arrested two men Anwar Aadil and Wajid Rasul Malik. The FIA said the men posted derogatory remarks against the government and the institutions.
- October 2017, Media student and a journalist for the Pashtun Express, Junaid Ibrahim was picked up by unidentified men in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).
- October 2017, journalist Islam Gul Afridi, working for Radio Pakistan and other websites reportedly disappeared from Khyber Agency.
- October 2017, unidentified men picked up journalist Shahnawaz Tarkzai, a reporter for Mashal Radio while visiting the media center in Shabqadar.
- October 2017, police registered a case of blasphemy under Section 298-A of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) against a young man for his social media posts in Haripur, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

- September 2017, unidentified motorcyclists hurled rock and smashed the windscreen of the car of senior journalist and TV show host Matiullah Jan who was traveling with his sons.
- September 2017, Four police officials suspended for torturing journalist Irfan Khoso in Thar, Sindh.
- August 2017, Inaam Abbasi, Editor of the Sindhi language Nao Niapo magazine abducted in Karachi.
- August 2017, Ghulam Rassol Burfati, sub-editor of Sindhi language Daily Sindh Express Hyderabad kidnapped in Jamshoro.
- July 2017, two cops suspended in Karachi for assaulting Express News reporter, Sajid Rauf.
- July 2017, journalist Aitzaz Hassan of Dawn News and female reporter Saba Bajeer of 24 News channel briefly detained and mishandled for doing their jobs at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) in Islamabad. FIA Assistant Director Tahir Tanveer approached Bajeer, grabbed her by the arm and ordered to delete photos.
- July 2017, journalist Abdullah Zafar of English newspaper the Nation blindfolded & taken away from his house in Karachi by unknown men including two in the Police Uniform. The unidentified abductors dropped him off after 20 hours near Karachi Airport. The motive and where the journalist was kept during his ordeal remained anonymous.
- June 2017, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested Zafarullah Achakzai, a reporter for the Qudrat daily newspaper in Quetta under Prevention of Cyber Act 2016 for his social media criticism of the government.
- June 2017, two unidentified men stabbed and robbed photojournalist Zeeshan Ali, working at the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) in Islamabad.
- June 2017, clerics and Madrassah students of Haqqania Masjid Islamabad thrash Din News journalists and broke cameras for drinking water during Ramzan fast.
- June 2017, security guards of University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) attacked and injured reporters and cameramen affiliated with Dunya News, Samaa and Express among other media outlets.
- June 2017, The Express Tribune reporter Rana Tanveer claimed that he had been hit by a car for advocating minority's rights.
- June 2017, senior Geo TV correspondent Aizaz Syed, files a police report of his attempted kidnapping in Islamabad.
- May 2017, an officer of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chaudhry Shahzad, two other persons namely Abid Kiani, his son Umar Kiani and their security guards physically assaulted Geo News reporter Ayaz Akbar Yousafzai.

#### **ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES - TIMELINE**

- April 2018, unidentified plain-clothed men kidnapped Laeeq Aslam, a Ph.D. student and lecturer at the Isra University of Science and Engineering (IUSE) from his home in Rawalpindi.



- March 2018, unidentified armed men kidnapped a tribal journalist Shah Zaman Mehsud in Tank, South Waziristan. He is a correspondent for a Karachi based Urdu newspaper.
- March 2018, unidentified men kidnapped Saeed Baloch, a senior year student at Bolan Medical College in Quetta. He returned home after few days.
- February 2018, unidentified men riding tinted vehicles kidnapped Hassan Shah in Karachi. Mr. Shah is the former employee of the armed forces of Pakistan. He was active with the Karachi Arts Council and respected member of the civil society in Pakistan. He was under investigation by Pakistan Army for quitting his job. He returned home after a month. He was locked up by the Orangi police station in Karachi. The police had refused his custody.
- February 2018, a primary school teacher and former activist of the separatist movement Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Ubaidullah Jarwar, kidnapped by the men riding in police vehicles in rural Sindh. The police are denying the kidnapping and clueless about the whereabouts of Mr. Jarwar. Just a few days ago, his journalist brother, Razaqat Jarwar was also kidnapped in rural Sindh.
- February 2018, Razaqat Jarwar, a journalist working for Daily Koshish, kidnapped by plainclothes and police uniformed men in rural Sindh.
- January 2018, two students of the Karachi University, Mumtaz Sajidi and Saif Dada Baloch, picked up by the plainclothes police in Karachi, returned home after two days. The students belong to the troubled province of Balochistan.
- January 2018, a minority Shia social activist and doctoral student at Karachi University, Syed Mumtaz Hussain Rizvi, disappeared in Karachi.

#### **CENSORSHIPS | BANS | FINES - TIMELINE**

- April 2018, following the *Supreme Court* ruling banning criticism on the judiciary, news channels partially censor and blur the speeches of the ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam.
- April 2018, following the Supreme Court ruling banning criticism on the judiciary, *Geo News* censors Sunday show of the host, Talat Hussain. The show was about the Chief Justice of Pakistan, *Saqib Nisar's VVIP motorcade of 36 vehicles*; the Chief justice had alternatively been clamoring against VVIP culture.
- April 2018, *the Lahore High Court (LHC)* blocks airing the speeches of the ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam for 15 days. The court terms the speeches as “anti-judiciary.”
- April 2018, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) stop *Geo News* reporter Ameen Hafeez and cameraman Ashraf Nankanvi from the coverage of Sikh pilgrims arriving from India.
- April 2018, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issues another warning to TV channels against *criticising judiciary and military*.
- April 2018, journalist Babar Sattar claims his weekly column in *TheNews* censored in the Geo and the Jang Group (that publishes The News) for mentioning the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM).

- April 2018, all five channels of the *Geo TV Network* pulled off-air in Pakistan. Both Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) and the Ministry of Information have denied ordering the shut-down of the channels.
- March 2018, the security staffs at the National Accountability Court (NAB) have blocked journalists and media workers from entering the court in Islamabad where ousted Prime Ministers, Nawaz Sharif appear to face corruption investigations, whereas all the ministers and political workers are allowed with mobile phones and without security checks.
- March 2018, the provincial Government of Punjab bans dancing in schools declaring it as ‘immoral and irreligious.’
- March 2018, The Central Board of Film Censors (CBFC) of Pakistan censored Bollywood (Indian) film *Pari* in Pakistan decreeing the film’s script, dialogues and storyline are non-Islamic and anti-Muslim.
- February 2018, Pakistan reaches out to Google to censor arbitrarily *blasphemy* contents to intensify onslaught on social media activists.
- February 2018, the district council in Dera Ghazi Khan (DI Khan) imposes a ban on *un-Islamic* beards.
- February 2018, Pakistan bars private electronic and print media to cover the first-ever international moot on human rights on the 70th Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) anniversary.
- February 2018, fearing a backlash from strengthening jihadist and the government, cab provider Careem cancels all promotion codes for *Valentine Day*.
- February 2018, Pakistan banned Bollywood's movie “Padman.” The movie deals with *menstrual hygiene*, a taboo to talk about in the country.
- February 2018, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) issued contempt notices to the owner and four employees of Waqt TV, over some of the comments in the show “*Apna Apna Gareban*.” The TV show investigates the accusations that some lawyers have seized the land of a football ground in the capital Islamabad.
- February 2018, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) reminds TV channels not to air or promote *valentine* programs.
- February 2018, the banned militant groups *Baloch separatist United Baloch Army (UBA)*, and *Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF)* called off media boycott in the province of Balochistan. During violent boycott which lasted more than four months, newspapers delivery was cut off, and media houses and press clubs were attacked.
- January 2018, Pakistan increased the fines 1,000 percent under *Ehtram-e-Ramazan Ordinance*, a law prohibits eating or drinking in public during fasting hours of the Muslim’s month of Ramdan.
- January 2018, Pakistan blocks Pushto language *Radio Mashaal* after state-owned spy agency’s (ISI) accusations of propaganda against Pakistan.
- January 2018, the police stopped the Institute for Peace and Secular Studies faculty and students from holding a vigil to mark the death anniversary of Salman Taseer in Lahore. Salman Taseer, the former Governor of the Punjab province killed by his guard for his advocacy to repeal *blasphemy laws*.

- December 2017, An Islamist group, the International Khatm-i-Nabuwat Movement (IKNM) threatens barbers of dire consequences for trimming un-Islamic beards in Mansehra.
- December 2017, bloggers and social media activists face imminent dangers of arrests and censorship as Islamabad High Court directs Pakistan government to increase monitoring online anti-blasphemy.
- December 2017, Law enforcement agencies (LEAs) forbid Muttahida Qaumi Movement-London (MQM-L) party workers from visiting cemeteries in Karachi and Hyderabad. The party activists wanted to honor those killed for the party's cause.
- November 2017, fearing Jihadist backlash, Pakistan shuts down news channels, Facebook, YouTube, internet and phone in many parts to conceal confrontation with anti-blasphemy Islamists.
- November 2017, The Akhurwal Union in Darra Adam Khel, bans the hiring of transgender and female dancers for festivities.
- November 2017, police start removing world-famous street arts from vehicles purporting "vulgarity" In Peshawar.
- November 2017, another danger unfolding for social media activists, journalists, and free press as Pakistan forms Regulatory Body to monitor and block online blasphemous Contents.
- October 2017, separatists groups blocked newspapers delivery to many parts of Balochistan province.
- October 2017, responding criticism & suppressing free speech, capital Islamabad revokes publication rights of two daily newspapers Sahafat & Dopahr.
- October 2017, a group of clerics refused to perform nikah (marriage) for those playing loud music in Peshawar.
- October 2017, Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal revealed plans to further intensify control and censorship over social media.
- October 2017, research by the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI) and Bytes for All Pakistan reveals that more than 200 URLs censored in Pakistan during past three years.
- October 2017, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) imposed a fine of Rs1 million on Geo News for airing comments on the armed forces of "institutional corruption" in TV programme "Aapas ki Baat."
- October 2017, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) debarred journalists from entering the accountability court in Islamabad where deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was attending his hearing in one of his corruption cases.
- September 2017, Taliban styled clerics ban musical parties in Landi Kotal, FATA.
- September 2017, Police registered a case against the cocktail party after an invitation goes viral with liquor bottles pics in DG Khan.
- September 2017, Pakistan media regulatory authority (PEMRA) issues show cause notice to Bol News for its host's Hamza Abbasi remarks about Pakistani passport.

- September 2017, Pakistan media regulatory authority (PEMRA) needs an explanation from URDU1 channel for airing censored Indian movie Dangal.
- August 2017, 64,000 social media users dubbed as “Cyber Criminals,” reported to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).
- August 2017, The Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) to go after the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) the PTA believes spreading blasphemous contents.
- July 2017, Pakistan asks Facebook to link accounts to mobile numbers, but Facebook refused.
- July 2017, Minister of State for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, Marriyum Aurazeb puts a lifetime ban on a poet from national TV after a Comedy show.
- July 2017, Police busted a Dance Party & briefly detained 50 men & women in Islamabad.
- May 2017, Police shut down a dance party over the weekend following the threats of religious Sunni Tehrik Lahore President Maulana Mujahid Abdul Rasool in Sozo Water Park, Lahore.
- May 2017, The Senate Standing Committee passed the Ehtram-e-Ramazan (Amendment) Bill, 2017 carrying 3-month jail and fines Rs500 to Rs25,000 for the people who smoke, eat or drink openly during the month of Ramdan.
- May 2017, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) sends text messages to the millions of Pakistanis containing the material, “Uploading and sharing the blasphemous content on the internet is a punishable offense under the law. Such contents should be reported on info pta.gov.pk for legal action.”
- May 2017, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) revokes Bol News license citing that the directors did not obtain security clearance from the Interior Ministry.

#### **MEDIA SITUATION IN PAKISTAN - TIMELINE**

- April 2018, one of the most celebrated and veteran comedians, Anwar Maqsood trolled and faced backlash over his political sarcasm on YouTube.
- April 2018, TV channel the Express News runs a fake story of banning the Urdu language in all campuses of the Sindh University. The story could deepen the segregation and exclusion of highly divided urban and the rural population of Sindh. Many lives have been lost over the years because of the lingual divisions.
- March 2018, TV channels including Geo, Capital TV, Channel 7, Channel 5, Business Plus, Waqat TV and Aaj TV have not paid wages to their media workers in some cases, for more than past two months.
- February 2018, a joint investigation team (JIT) declared television anchor Shahid Masood's claims made against the convict of little Zainab rape and murder case. Shahid made these claims in newsONE late night show. It is shamefully common for self-proclaimed journalists and news channels in Pakistan to use sensitive issues to increase ratings and work toward hidden political agenda. Neither the channel nor the anchor has issued an apology.

## **POLITICAL PARTIES ATTACKS AGAINST FREE PRESS AND SUPPORT TO BLASPHEMY LAWS - TIMELINE**

- April 2018, Pakistan defers a case against Islamist cleric Khahdim Rizvi and co-conspirators. In November 2017, Pakistan had surrendered to the demands of the Islamists group Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY) after they seized capital city of Islamabad and later spread to the other parts of the country. The TLY demands included stiffer penalties over blasphemy, the resignation of those sitting Ministers critical of blasphemy laws, fast registration of blasphemy cases, and induction of more religious holidays. Pakistan granted full impunity to the Islamists from their killings, assaults, kidnapping, and torture to the journalists and the police. The Islamists also attacked the public and the government property and the houses of parliamentarians. The government also handed cash to the Islamists as a travel allowance to go back to their hometowns.
- April 2018, supporters of provincial Agriculture Minister Jaffar Khan Mandokhail assaulted a TV journalist Asad Khan Betini in Zhob, Quetta. The journalist was investigating the reports of corruption in the Minister's jurisdiction.
- April 2018, a councilor Rai Mohammad Khan assaulted and detained a DawnNewsTV reporter, Sheikh in Sheikhpura, Punjab. The reporter was following up with the reports of below average materials in a sewerage project in the area.
- April 2018, to win the Islamist's votes in the coming elections, the provincial government of Punjab has amended a law to increase the number of the loudspeakers from one to four at the mosques. According to the Punjab Sound Systems Regulation Act, 2015, only one loudspeaker was permitted to control hate speech and promote blasphemy laws that had resulted in the killings of both Muslim and non-Muslim minorities and promulgated after the Peshawar Army Public School attack.
- April 2018, the Inspector General (IG) of the Punjab police informs the Supreme Court of Pakistan that the killer of journalist Zeeshan Butt an affiliate of the ruling party Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N).
- April 2018, a provincial lawmaker of the Punjab Assembly, Malik Taimoor Masood, belonging to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), asks for a ban on word TALAAQ (divorce) on TV shows terming it damaging to Islam.
- March 2018, Asif Ali Zardari, Co-Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the former President of Pakistan defended infamously and now under arrest police officer Anwar Rao in TV interview and called him "hard working boy." The disgraced police officer has allegedly killed 444 civilians in fake Police Encounters. The PPP government kept him posted in one jurisdiction more than a decade against the procedural transfers and postings.
- March 2018, a court indicted five men for the murder of a female activist Perween Rahman in Karachi. Ms. Rahman was murdered in 2013 and working in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Karachi for poverty alleviation. During interrogation, the accused revealed that the Awami National Party (ANP) had hired Taliban militants to kill Ms. Rahman because she was resisting against their plans to build a business on a confiscated piece of land.
- March 2018, Nawa-i-Waqt group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Rameeza Majid Nizami alleged that the staff of Kashmala Tariq, the Federal Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace, illegally detained Waqt News television team and physically assaulted journalist,

Matiullah Jan. According to the reports, the Minister was dissatisfied with the interview recorded earlier and wanted the footage back. Ms. Rameeza supported her claims with a video footage.

- February 2018, the provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government led by Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announce a massive grant of Rs300 million for Darul Uloom Haqqania. The Haqqania seminaries led by infamous Taliban supported Samiul Haq. Bothe Samiul Haq and his Darul Uloom Haqqania are involved in many suicide attacks and mass murders. The PTI, led by Imran Khan, started funding Darul Uloom Haqqania in 2016 purportedly to win Jihadi voters and showcasing their street power in DHARANAS (sit-ins). Since 2016, the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has given away more than USD five million to Darul Uloom Haqqania.
- February 2018, Senator Mufti Abdul Sattar of political-jihadist party Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Fazl (JUI-F), targeted female Senator Nasreen Jalil with a sexist about her dress by saying, a woman like her should have an "appearance like Muslims". Ironically, the female Senator was targeted while chairing Senate's Functional Committee on Human Rights.
- February 2018, political-Jihadist parties Jamaat-e-Islami (JIP) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) celebrated and turned acquitted men as their heroes in Mashaal murder case. It is widely believed that the acquitted men belong to the political-Jihadi parties. Ajmal Mayar is the most controversial man acquitted, who along with other men were identified by the Joint Investigation Team (JIT). In April 2017, an angry mob lynched Mashal Khan, a journalism student at the Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan for his liberal views and Freedom of Expression on social media. Mob hit him with stones, sticks, shot, and threw his body from the second floor of the campus to death, and later tried to set his body ablaze. Police admitted after his brutal murder that Mashal's social media accounts contained no blasphemous material and many fake accounts were detected using his name. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) councilor Arif Mardan is still at large in this case.
- February 2018, Imran Khan, head of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), threatened a journalist by responding "I am very dangerous." The journalist was asking a question about his appearance in the court of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).
- January 2018, Pakistan Muslim League and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) conspired with the jihadist's Tehreek Khuddam Ahl-i-Sunnat Waljamaat (TKASW) for the PP-20 by-election in Chakwal.
- December 2017, all 6,286 women voters in Islamists control Dir Districts in Pakistan deprived of the voting rights in municipal by-elections.
- November 2017, Imran Khan, head of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), known for its support to the Islamists, says his workers wanted to join anti-blasphemy clerics at Faizabad.
- November 2017, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) praised the killer of a former governor of the Punjab Salman Taseer's killer Mumtaz Qadri in the By-election campaigns for NA-101 and NA-120 for winning Islamists votes. Qadri killed Salman Taseer for criticizing the country's blasphemy laws. Later, Mumtaz Qadri was put to death by a Pakistani court. Islamists declared Qadri "martyr" who gave his life for Islam.
- According to a suspect confession, sectarian Awami National Party (ANP) hired Taliban to murder female activist Parveen Rehman in Karachi in 2013.
- October 2017, a newly emerged Jihadi group turned political party, Tehrik-e-Labaik Pakistan secured 7.6 percent votes in a by-election in Peshawar promising "Death to blasphemers."

- October 2017, Capt (R) Safdar of ruling Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz Sharif (PML-N) and son-in-law of the ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for a ban on hiring Ahmadis minorities in the armed forces and other important institutions of the country in a fiery hate speech in the Parliament.
- October 2017, a religious parliamentarian and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman issues an edict of Death Penalty to anyone criticizing an Islamic Khatm-e-Nabuwat law while addressing a public rally in Swat.
- September 2017, Security staff assault reporters of channels 92 & Duniya News at the accountability court in Islamabad where deposed PM Nawaz Sharif was present to face corruption charges.
- September 2017, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader KhursheedShah, known for land grabbing and living in a house built on a grabbed land, threatens SAMAA TV's Sukkur Bureau Chief, Imdad Phulpoto by offering a land for his grave. The politician was trying to dodge the questions about his reported links with land mafia.
- August 2017, crews of Bol News and ARY News assaulted in deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's rally.
- July 2017, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) condemning blogger Waqas Goraya and TheNews journalist Ahmad Noorani for in Chiniot.
- July 2017, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) woman councilor Hina Akhtar and accomplices arrested in Haripur for the murder of journalist Bakhshish Elahi, the bureau chief of an Urdu newspaper.
- June 2017, Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) lawmaker and the Public Accounts Committee chairman Abdul Majeed Khan Achakzai crushed an on-duty police officer to death. He shouted a stream of expletives at the journalists in the premises of the judicial magistrate's court.
- June 2017, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq threatened journalists to revoke their entry passes for video recording inside the parliament house.
- June 2017, The Express Tribune reporter, Zubair Ashraf was beaten by the Pakistan Muslim League (Functional) president's guards when the reporter complaint about dangerous driving of the politician's motorcade that almost took his life.