

## Combating impunity: Collective response to threats stressed

By [Waqas Naeem](#)

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### ISLAMABAD:

**A new, inclusive action plan might be a ray of hope for Pakistani journalists constantly facing threats to their lives in the line of duty.**

The “United Nations (UN) Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists on the Issue of Impunity” was unveiled at the concluding session of a two-day conference organised by Intermedia here on Thursday.



The UN action plan aims to create a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in both conflict and non-conflict situations. It is being piloted in five countries including Pakistan.

Speakers at the conference hoped the plan will raise the public profile of impunity against journalists and help eliminate violence against them.

The plan comes with an implementation strategy focusing on four objectives: to support member states to guarantee journalists’ safety and to reinforce the work of organizations and media houses on the issue of impunity.

The plan encourages joint or complementary activities by outside actors such as the national action plan on media safety prepared by Intermedia and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) in November 2012.

It seeks government support for investigating the cases of slain journalists. It also calls to form a group of eminent journalists to mediate between workers and media owners.

“The media needs to fashion a collective response to the threats it faces,” Adnan Rehmat, executive director of Intermedia said.

Intermedia is the focal organisation for the action plan in the Pakistan. The plan's operationalisation will be coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

While the "inclusive" action plan aims to bring together state institutions, intergovernmental, media houses and civil society organizations, representatives of the government and media houses did not attend the conference.

"It is very disturbing as for the last two days I have not seen any government officials at such an important event," Mazhar Abbas, director of news at Express News, said.

Abbas said the working condition of journalists, including poor wages and breaking news pressures, is directly linked with their security.

Rehmat said despite confirmations from political parties only four representatives showed up. Representatives of editors' and news publishers' guilds did not attend either, even after committing, he said.

At the end of the conference, the participating organisations formed the Pakistan Coalition on Media Safety, which will form a roadmap to combat impunity. Rehmat, Abbas, Hamid Mir and Owais Aslam Ali were nominated for the coalition's working committee.

The conference was attended by over 15 international media support and development groups including the Committee to Protect Journalists. The international organizations formed an "International Friends of Pakistan Media Alliance" and pledged to support Pakistani media with legal help, advocacy and training.

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## International conference: Journalists' safety takes centre stage

By [Waqas Naeem](#)

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The Pakistan Journalist Safety Fund has helped 30 journalists over two years, including putting five journalists in safe houses for protection.



### ISLAMABAD:

**Over 90 journalists have lost their lives in the line of duty in Pakistan since 2000. Just in the space of one week, from February 25 to March 2 this year, three journalists were murdered across the country.**

As if that was not enough, all six eyewitnesses of the murder of Karachi-based reporter Wali Khan Babar have been killed.

What is, perhaps, more terrifying than these statistics is the impunity with which journalists are being targeted and the lack of institutional and state protection in the country.

With the objective of discussing ways to combat this impunity, media professionals from Pakistan sat together with their international counterparts at the 'International Conference on Promoting Safety of Journalists and the UN Action Plan on Impunity' on Wednesday.

The two-day conference is being conducted by Intermedia, in collaboration with UNESCO and other international media support groups. In addition to raising awareness among journalists about measures to reduce threats against them, the conference also aims to highlight the UN Action Plan against Impunity. The plan, which is being piloted in five countries including Pakistan, will be unveiled at the conference today (Thursday).