



**International  
Federation  
of Journalists**

Younes Mjahed  
**President**

Anthony Bellanger  
**General Secretary**

**Dr. Arif Alvi,  
President, Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
Islamabad.**

**Subject: Addressing a media crisis – implementation labour and media laws in Pakistan**

Your Excellency,

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), established in 1926, is the global voice of journalists, representing over 600,000 media workers from 190 affiliates in 150 countries. I write to draw your attention on behalf of IFJ and its affiliate, the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), toward the pressing issue of the general state of non-enforcement of the rights of the journalists and media workers of Pakistan that requires emergency redressal.

Journalists and media workers in Pakistan have been facing a wave of attacks – among them killings, kidnappings, harassment and legal cases registered. For three years now, special legislation on the safety of journalists has been pending before the federal government for approval. This must be passed by Pakistan's national parliament urgently to combat a crisis impunity for crimes against journalists.

During this same period, journalists and media workers in Pakistan have also faced a wave of retrenchments, salary cuts and non-payment of wages affecting not just thousands of journalists and their families but heavily impacting the state of freedom of expression in the country.

IFJ's 2021 study conducted by Pakistani legal analysis group IRADA, [Decent Work in Pakistani Media: An Assessment of Labour Laws and Impacts for Media Workers](#), shows that in the last ten years a mere 2,783 of 40,474 cases have been settled by the Independent Tribunal for Newspaper Employees (ITNE). Another 38,956 cases remain pending before ITNE tribunals, indicating the clear need for a new mechanism to be implemented to expeditiously provide justice to litigants. Another 2021 report, produced with IFJ support, [Modernisation and Reforms: Promoting Labour Rights, Gender Equality and Freedom of Association in Pakistan's Shifting media Landscape](#), indicates a large body of women journalists and digital journalists who face exclusion in terms of their labour rights.

With these critical issues reaching crisis proportions, IFJ and PFUJ see that all Pakistani labour and media related laws must urgently be brought into line with the needs of technology-driven transformation of the industry to ensure they align with labour best practices and international standards.

So too, with the expanding digitalization of media landscapes in Pakistan there must be inclusion of freelancers and online/digital workers into the legal framework. This includes expanding the jurisdiction of ITNE to journalists and media workers from only print media to electronic and digital media, as well as freelancers, so that their labour rights are enforced. The Press Council of Pakistan also needs to be immediately re-activated by appointment of a chairperson and members to adequately address and service the grievances of media workers.



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The actions outlined above would be a great service to the media workers of Pakistan and serve to strengthen freedom of expression and democratic norms in the country.

Thanking you in anticipation

Anthony Bellanger  
IFJ General Secretary

*Anthony BELLANGER*

