



Identifiers:

ID: 371-25/DTN

December 30, 2025

Correspondence: Taha Nazir PhD, Researcher, Worker, and Journalist. Thomson Reuters - ID N-5730-2015 | ORCID ID - orcid.org/0000-0002-5308-6798 | <https://tahanazir.com>

AI Tools: Artificial Intelligence tools employed for scientific content development, data analysis, formulation, synthesis and conclusions for accuracy, validity and implications of the work.

Conflict of interest:

Author accepts all potential conflict of interest.

Funding:

The authors received no direct funding.

Ethics approval:

No ethical approval needed for this work.

Consent for publication:

Author is agreed to publish this article.

Peer Review: Not peer reviewed

Blog Article

TRUTH-TELLERS FACE THE SAME FATE: EXILE, INTIMIDATION OR DEATH

Taha Nazir PhD

Research Scientist, Writer, Media Professional and Social Worker. <https://tahanazir.com/>

[ORCID](#) | [Publons](#) | [ResearchGate](#) | [Scopus](#) | [Academia](#) | [Linkedin](#) | [Google Scholar](#) | [Loop Frontiers](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Scinapse](#)

Running title: Pakistan's Truth-Tellers: Exile, Intimidation, and Death

Keywords: Truth-tellers, Pakistan, Political persecution, Military suppression, Assassination, Exile, Intimidation, Journalists

Data Source: Archives, Biographies, Databanks, Encyclopedias, Libraries, Metadata Registries, Reports, Repositories, arXiv, Crossref, OpenAI, Wikipedia, World Health Organization, Zenodo.

Pakistan's political history reveals a disturbing pattern:

Individuals who challenge the dominance of the military or state power often face threats, violence, or death under suspicious circumstances.

Fatima Jinnah:

Fatima Jinnah, known as the "Mother of the Nation", died mysteriously in 1967 after running a bold presidential campaign against military ruler Ayub Khan. No autopsy was conducted. Family members and historians continue to question the official version of her death.

Liaquat Ali Khan:

Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first Prime Minister, was assassinated at a public rally in 1951. The assassin was immediately killed by police, eliminating any chance for investigation or a possible confession. The case remains unresolved.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto:

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a popular elected Prime Minister, was

removed in a military coup and executed after a controversial and heavily criticized trial in 1979. Global rights organizations and legal experts condemned the trial as politically motivated.

Benazir Bhutto:

Benazir Bhutto was killed in a combined shooting and bomb attack in 2007. A UN report pointed to severe failures in her security detail. The crime scene was washed within hours, destroying key evidence. No senior official was ever held accountable.

Imran Khan:

Imran Khan, former Prime Minister, survived a gun attack during a protest march in 2022. The attacker claimed religious motives, but glaring inconsistencies raised serious questions. Security was withdrawn before the attack. CCTV footage went missing. The crime scene was compromised. Imran Khan directly accused a senior intelligence officer, but no independent investigation was allowed.

Saleem Shahzad:

Saleem Shahzad, a journalist investigating links between the military and extremist groups, was abducted and tortured to death in 2011. Human Rights Watch cited sources implicating intelligence agencies, yet no arrests were made.

Arshad Sharif:

Arshad Sharif, a journalist critical of the military, fled Pakistan after receiving threats. He was shot dead in Kenya in what authorities called a case of mistaken identity. A Pakistani inquiry suggested deeper coordination may have been involved, but no conclusions have been reached.

Sabeen Mahmud:

Sabeen Mahmud, a human rights activist, was killed shortly after hosting a talk on Baloch missing persons. The timing of her murder suggests she was targeted for giving a platform to sensitive voices.

Akbar Bugti:

Akbar Bugti, a prominent Baloch leader, was killed in a military operation in 2006. His body was never handed over to his family. His death sparked widespread unrest in Balochistan and intensified separatist sentiment.

Balach Marri:

Balach Marri, another Baloch nationalist, was killed in Afghanistan. Baloch groups allege cross-border targeting with Pakistani intelligence involvement. The government never commented officially on the incident.

Conclusion:

Across all these cases, certain patterns repeat: victims had challenged military authority. Investigations were either blocked or mismanaged. Crime scenes were tampered with. Accused individuals were killed, silenced, or never tried. Not a single senior official has ever been convicted or punished in any of these incidents.

Failed assassination attempts, like the one on Imran Khan, also follow the same script: sudden withdrawal of security, mysterious attackers with weak motives, destruction of evidence, and complete lack of accountability.

This decades-long pattern strongly suggests a systemic effort to eliminate or neutralize dissenting voices. Even when direct evidence is scarce, the repetition of similar methods, timing, and consequences forms a compelling body of circumstantial proof.

The violence is not limited to politicians. Journalists, activists, and ethnic leaders have also been targeted in similar ways, often after speaking out against military operations or state-sponsored injustice.

The overarching trend reveals that in Pakistan, challenging the entrenched power structure often comes at the highest cost. Whether through execution, assassination, or exile, dissent is punished. And justice remains elusive.

While not all cases can be definitively linked to the state, the recurring nature of such incidents, lack of credible investigations, and institutional silence foster the perception of systematic suppression of dissent.

The attempted assassination of Imran Khan in 2022 fits into this long historical arc. Although he survived, the attack underscored how opposition to military authority can come at a dangerous cost—even for popular leaders.

"From Fatima Jinnah to Arshad Sharif - Pakistan's truth-tellers face the same fate: exile, intimidation or death. The price for challenging the military establishment remains lethally consistent."

What do you think about persecution of scholars, intellectuals, and professionals for telling truth?
Tell us in the comment section

Editorial Statement:

This is research-based manuscript, prepared and structured in a scientific manner. Modern AI-assisted tools used to access current and authentic info. The digital archives, bibliographic databanks, online libraries, research articles, academic repositories and encyclopedias employed.

Preprint Notice:

This manuscript is shared as a non-peer-reviewed preprint on platforms such as Zenodo, SSRN, and Research Square to support scholarly discussion. The content is research-based and developed using publicly available and verifiable sources. Readers are encouraged to interpret the material as preliminary and subject to revision.

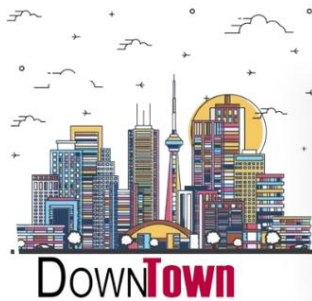
Disclaimer:

This non-peer-reviewed article is shared for general academic discussion. AI tools were used to assist with clarity and organization. Readers are advised to independently assess and verify the information.

References:

- BBC News. (2024). *Imran Khan assassination attempt: What we know*.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-64502076>
- Human Rights Watch. (2012). *"They Took Me from the Camp": Balochistan's Disappeared*.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/08/13/they-took-me-camp/balochistans-disappeared>

- Committee to Protect Journalists. (2021). *Death of Arshad Sharif — journalist killed in Kenya*. <https://cpj.org/2020/10/journalist-arshad-sharif-killed-kenya/>
- Amnesty International. (2015). *Pakistan: Attacks on journalists and human rights defenders*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/05/pakistan-attacks-on-journalists/>
- The Guardian. (2007). *Benazir Bhutto assassination: UN report finds security failures*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/dec/30/pakistan.benazirbhutto>
- Dawn News. (2011). *Saleem Shahzad murder: HRW implicates intelligence agencies*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/661627/saleem-shahzad-murder-hrw-report>
- Al Jazeera. (2023). *Press freedom in Pakistan: Journalists under threat*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/2/press-freedom-pakistan-journalists-under-threat>
- Human Rights Watch. (2007). *Jailing history: Pakistan's legal treatment of political dissent*. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2007/country-chapters/pakistan>
- BBC News. (2018). *Fatima Jinnah: Controversies around “Mother of the Nation”*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-43578207>
- International Crisis Group. (2020). *Pakistan: Military influence and politics*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/pakistan/300-pakistans-military-influence-politics>



© 2025 DownTown News. This publication is released under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. You are permitted to: Share: Copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. Adapt: Remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, including commercial use. These freedoms cannot be revoked if the licensing terms are followed.
License Terms: Attribution: You must provide appropriate credit to DownTown News, include a link to the CC BY 4.0 license, and indicate if any changes were made. Attribution must be given in a reasonable manner that does not imply endorsement by DownTown News. No Additional Restrictions: You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that restrict others from exercising the permissions granted by this license.

For full license details, please refer to the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).