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Press Under Pressure: Pakistani Journalists Battle Censorship and Intimidation

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Journalists in Pakistan are increasingly facing threats, surveillance and intimidation in an environment that continues to shrink freedom of expression. With growing concerns about censorship and media control, especially from powerful state institutions, many reporters find themselves caught between professional duty and personal safety. The

country's press freedom, once a cornerstone of its democratic fabric, is now under sustained pressure.

Over recent years, Pakistan's media landscape has experienced a noticeable shift. Independent voices, once able to speak freely, are now being silenced through legal threats, arrests and digital monitoring. Incidents involving the targeting of journalists by intelligence agencies have been reported by international watchdogs such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF). The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) has also raised the alarm, calling for stronger protections and transparency in cases involving press intimidation. While officials deny any systemic crackdown, the rising number of enforced disappearances and restrictions tells a different story.



Economic instability has only added to the crisis. With shrinking advertising revenues and state pressure influencing media owners, newsrooms are increasingly toeing the line to avoid conflict with authorities. This results in a decline in investigative reporting, especially around sensitive issues such as military affairs, political corruption and human rights violations. Journalists who dare to challenge the status quo face social media harassment, physical violence or worse. In some cases, families of journalists are threatened, making it clear that silence is the price for safety.

The survival of free press in Pakistan now depends on more than just the courage of individual journalists. It requires legal reform, institutional accountability and a commitment from the government to uphold constitutional freedoms, not just in word but in practice. Without genuine media independence, democratic dialogue suffers, and citizens are left in the dark. The country cannot move forward if truth-telling is criminalized

and dissent punished. As global attention turns to press freedom, Pakistan's standing will continue to decline unless immediate steps are taken to protect its journalists. The stakes are not just for media workers, but for every citizen who depends on honest reporting to make informed decisions in a functioning democracy.

