

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA PROFESSIONALS BILL, 2021

I, acting Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Human Rights have the honour to present this report on the Bill to promote, protect and effectively ensure the independence, impartiality, safety and freedom of expression of journalists and media professionals [The Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Bill, 2021] (Government Bill), referred to the Committee on 21-05-2021.

2. The Committee comprises the following:-

1.	Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari	Chairman
2.	Ms. Ghulam Bibi	Member
3.	Mr. Saif-ur-Rehman	Member
4.	Mr. Attaullah	Member
5.	Ms. Ghazala Saifi	Member
6.	Ms. Rukhsana Naveed	Member
7.	Ms. Zille Huma	Member
8.	Ms. Fouzia Behram	Member
9.	Ms. Tashfeen Safdar	Member
10.	Mr. Lal Chand	Member
11.	Ms. Shunila Ruth	Member
12.	Agha Hassan Baloch	Member
13.	Ms. Shaista Pervaiz	Member
14.	Mr. Mohsin Dawar	Member
15.	Mr. Abdul Rehman Khan Kanju	Member
16.	Ms. Zaib Jaffar	Member
17.	Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja	Member
18.	Shazia Marri	Member
19.	Dr. Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto	Member
20.	Mr. James Iqbal,	Member
21.	Dr. Shireen M. Mazari	Ex-Officio
	Minister for Human Rights	Member

3. The Committee considered the Bill as introduced in the National Assembly placed, at "Annex-A", in its meetings held on 17-06-2021 and 29-9-2021. The Committee proposed the following amendments, therein:-

(1) Clause 2

In clause (2):-

(i) after paragraph (h) following new paragraph (i) shall be added and the remaining paragraphs shall be re-numbered, accordingly:-

" (i) "Intimidation" means threatening a person with any injury to his person, reputation or property, or to the person or reputation of any one in whom that person is interested, with intent to cause alarm to that person, or to cause that person to do any act which he is legally bound to

- (ii) after renumbered paragraph (o), following new paragraph (p) shall be added, namely: -

“(p) “Torture” means an act committed by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions”

- (iii) the existing text shall be marked as sub-clause (1) and thereafter following new sub-clause (2) shall be added, namely: -

“(2) All other words and expressions used but not defined in this Act shall have the same meanings as may be assigned to them under all applicable laws in Pakistan including the Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860), Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898), and Qanoon-e-Shahadat, 1984 (P.O.No.X of 1984).”

(2) Clause 3

In Clause 3, in sub-clause (5) after the expression “without threats,” the expression “intimidation,” shall be inserted.

(3) Clause 4

In Clause 4, sub-clauses (2) and (3) shall be substituted with the following, namely; -

“(2) The Government shall ensure that no person, officer, agency or institution unlawfully or arbitrarily interferes with the right to privacy of any journalist, reporter or media professional and his/her home, correspondence (including electronic correspondences) and family.

(3) The Government shall ensure that no journalist, reporter or media professional is forced, induced, compelled, coerced or threatened for the disclosure of his/her sources of information by any person, officer, agency, authority or institution save without due process of the law.”

(4) Clause 6

In Clause 6, shall be substituted with the following, namely; -

“6. Good faith obligation of journalists and media professionals. – (1) All journalists and media professionals must respect the rights or reputations of others and not produce material that advocates national, racial, ethnic, religious, sectarian, linguistic, cultural or gender-based hatred, which may constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.