

## **Summary of Pakistani government's commitments made to the CPJ delegation, March 19-21, 2014**

### **1. Establish a joint government-journalists commission to address continued attacks on the press, develop recommendations, and serve as an interlocutor between the media and the government.**

In the March 19 meeting with CPJ, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif proposed “constituting a commission to look into attacks on journalists,” noting that, “If we could all work together—journalists and governments—it will make the tasks that much easier.” The prime minister invited Ahmed Rashid to join the commission.

The commission will take three to six months to establish, according to Dr. Nazir Saeed, Secretary Ministry of Information Broadcasting and National Heritage, who met with the CPJ delegation on March 20. The commission will likely include representatives from the Ministries of Law and Information, as well as journalism bodies and experts. The commission will meet monthly with the capacity to convene for emergency meetings. The Ministry of Information is developing Terms of Reference.

### **2. Appoint special prosecutors in all four provinces and federally to investigate crimes against journalists.**

This commitment was made by Information Minister Pervaiz Rasheed, who participated in the meeting with the prime minister and spoke following the meeting at a public gathering of the Pakistan Commission on Media Safety, PCOMS. It will take three to six months to appoint the special prosecutors, Dr. Saeed told the CPJ delegation at the March 20 meeting. A federal government subcommittee has been established and is holding consultations with provincial governments to establish laws on the provincial and federal level. The federal government is looking to appoint an elite group of prosecutors trained by the U.K. in forensics and other areas. The government is considering legislation that would make an attack on a journalist a federal crime in certain circumstances, but made no firm commitment.

### **3. Expedite the prosecution of the killers of journalists by changing trial venues and expanding witness protection programs.**

The prime minister told the CPJ delegation that the government would support changes in trial venues or enhanced witness protection, as appropriate. Parliament is also considering legislation that will facilitate support for the

families of slain journalists, according to Dr. Saeed, who noted that the government has provided security in response to requests from journalists in many cases.

- 4. Speak out in support of media freedom and in support of journalists under attack, particularly in high-conflict areas like Baluchistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.**
- 5. Include the protection of journalists as a negotiating point in upcoming peace talks with the Taliban.**

“The issue will be taken up with the Taliban,” the prime minister told the CPJ delegation.

- 6. Expedite visas for international journalists in Pakistan.**

“We must make Pakistan accessible to journalists,” the prime minister told the CPJ delegation. During the meeting, he asked his adviser, Tariq Fatemi, to resolve the issue immediately. In our follow-up meeting on March 20, the information secretary said he would take up the issue of visas with a government committee that had been previously established.

- 7. Review immediately the case of *New York Times* Bureau Chief Declan Walsh, who was expelled from Pakistan in May 2013.**

“Eviction is far too harsh a punishment,” the prime minister told the CPJ delegation. “We are reconsidering Walsh’s case,” Information Minister Rasheed said.