

15 Kenyan, regional, and international organizations demand justice in the killing of Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif

May 2, 2023 – Six months after Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif [was killed](#) in Kenya, we express our deep concern over the failure by Kenyan authorities to fully investigate and provide a credible account of the circumstances surrounding his death. We renew our call for the investigations into Sharif’s killing to be expedited and urge authorities to ensure that those responsible are held to account in a transparent and credible judicial process.

After [facing persecution](#) in Pakistan, Sharif sought safety abroad, fleeing to Dubai in August 2022 before traveling to Kenya later that month. Kenya’s National Police Service said that Sharif, a prominent journalist who previously worked as a news anchor with the Pakistani broadcaster ARY News, was [fatally shot](#) by an officer on the night of October 23, 2022 at a roadblock in Kajiado County, set up to search for a stolen vehicle. On October 24, 2022 the Independent Policing Oversight Authority, whose mandate is to investigate acts of violence and suspicious killings by police, [said](#) it had deployed a rapid response team to investigate Sharif’s killing.

Kenyan police said that Sharif was shot in a case of “mistaken identity”. Information from Pakistan cast doubts on those claims. In a December 2022 [report](#), Pakistani investigators described the Kenyan police version of events as “full of contradictions” and “not believable”. The investigators said that Sharif’s killing was “a case of planned targeted assassination with transnational characters rather than a case of mistaken identity”.

President William Ruto has [repeatedly condemned](#) extrajudicial killings as “unconstitutional” and offensive to “every principle of the right to life”. Providing credible answers to questions surrounding Sharif’s killing would demonstrate Kenya’s commitment to ending extrajudicial killings. The ongoing lack of accountability in this case also contributes to the erosion of Kenya’s image as a regional haven of democracy and stability, and dents its international reputation as a country where persecuted journalists and dissidents can find safety. Justice for Sharif would help in reassuring Kenya’s media and a significant cohort of international journalists who have made a home in the country of their safety.

Kenya failed to protect Arshad Sharif when he sought safety within its borders. It is well past time that authorities deliver the justice owed to his family.

The signatories are:

Article 19 Eastern Africa
Bloggers Association of Kenya
Committee to Protect Journalists
Eastern Africa Editors’ Society
International Press Association of East Africa

Kenya Community Media Network
Kenya Correspondents Association
Kenya Editors' Guild
Kenya Human Rights Commission
Kenya Union of Journalists
Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI)
Pan African Lawyers Union
PEN International
Protection International Africa
The National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders in Kenya (Defenders Coalition-Kenya)