



Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives

What is Impunity



KIDNAPPING
 ABUSE OF STATE POWER
 WEAK HUMAN RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT
 THREATS TO FAMILY
 REPRESSION CIVIL SOCIETY
 ATTACKS
 TORTURE
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 ORGANISED CRIME
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 INTERNATIONAL
 POLITICAL INTERESTS
 CORPORATE INTERESTS
 POLITICISED JUDICIARY
 INSPECURITY
 GLOBAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS
 WEAK HUMAN RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT



Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives

House # 370, Street # 75,
E-11/3, MPCHS, Islamabad
t: +92 51 237 5158-9, 431 94 30
e: info@cpdi-pakistan.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/cpdi.pakistan

www.cpdi-pakistan.org

The Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI) is an independent, non-partisan and a not-for-profit civil society organization working on issues of peace and development in Pakistan since 2003. It is registered UNDER SECTION 42 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984 (XLVII of 1984). CPDI specializes in six sectors of development: Media Watch, Promotion of Peace and Tolerance, Rule of Law, Transparency and Right to Information, Budget Watch, Legislative Watch and Democratic Development.

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What is impunity?

When someone acts with impunity, it means that their actions have no consequences. Intimidation, threats, attacks and murders go unpunished.

In the past 10 years, more than 500 journalists have been killed. Murder is the ultimate form of censorship, and media are undoubtedly on the frontlines of free expression. When journalists have been murdered, in 9 out of 10 cases the murderers have gone free.

Countless other citizens, artists, bloggers, musicians and journalists have been harassed, threatened, tortured, intimidated, jailed and worse for exercising their basic human right to express themselves. Most crimes against free expression go unpunished.

What we are dealing with is a culture of impunity.

What do we mean by “a culture of impunity?”

A culture of impunity exists when those who deny others their right to freedom of expression do so knowing it is unlikely they will be held accountable for their actions.

A culture of impunity creates a climate of insecurity for those practising their right to freedom of expression. This leads to a world where people are afraid to speak out. Where criticism is stifled. Where the hard questions don't get asked. Where the powerful don't get challenged. The result is a world where free expression is silenced.

Culture of Impunity

The culture of impunity takes many forms. All of them silence free expression.

Individuals

In a culture of impunity, those who speak out may be subjected to threats, attacks and even murder. Many of these crimes go uninvestigated. When human rights are not respected, expressing yourself can have deadly consequences.

Societal

A culture of impunity fosters a climate of fear, apathy and suspicion where individuals are afraid to talk about the issues that affect their communities and societies at large. The result? An ill-informed society resigned to the status quo.

National

Weak rule of law and the failure of national institutions are at the root of a culture of impunity. In a country with pervasive corruption, unchecked state power and an ineffectual judicial system, justice cannot be served.

International

When international political and economic agendas are prioritised over individual human rights, these interests become driving forces in creating and sustaining an unjust culture of impunity.

