

[TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT PAKISTAN]

A

BILL

to facilitate the journalists by ensuring their rights, dignity, welfare and protection

WHEREAS, it is expedient to enact a law for the welfare and protection of the journalists in order to enable them to perform their duties in a better way;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. Short title, extent and commencement:-

- 1) This Act may be called the Journalists Welfare Act, 2012.
- 2) It shall extend to the whole of Pakistan.
- 3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions:- In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant to the subject or context,

- a) “government” means federal government or a provincial government;
- b) “journalist” means the journalist, including both male and female, as anyone who regularly gathers, prepares, collects, records, writes, edits, reports, analyzes or publishes news or information that concerns local, national or international events or other matters of public interest;
- c) “facility” means care provided by the government to the journalists;

3. Social welfare fund for the journalists:-

- 1) A Social Welfare Fund shall be established for journalists and in case of sudden death, the spouse, children and other dependants shall get benefit from Social Welfare Fund which would include scholarships, marriage assistance and free education.
- 2) If a journalist loses life during performance of duties, or is injured, his/her family shall be compensated with at least rupees seven lakh in case of death, rupees two lakh in case of major injury and rupees one lac in case of minor injury and the treatment cost would be borne by the government.

4. Steps for the special safety measures:

- 1) The Government shall be responsible for providing on-spot and on- demand protection facility to the journalists.
- 2) In case any journalist feels threatened and needs protection, the SHO of the area where the journalists reside or any other area, shall provide the required protection and security.

5. Provision of necessary facilities:-

- 1) In case of national calamity, eruption of fire, accidents, or natural disasters, the Federal Government shall provide all the required facilities to journalists during coverage, especially in emergency situations.
- 2) Journalist and his immediate family members shall be entitled to free medical treatment at government hospitals all over the country. In case of emergency medical treatment to journalists, the District Health Officer or Tehsil Health Officer, as the case may be, shall be primarily responsible for such treatment.
- 3) The government shall ensure protection of and support to all women journalists against any type of harassment or discrimination in the performance of their duties.
- 4) The government shall ensure Special Training Programs to be introduced for journalists who are working in conflict or combat zones.

6. Power to make rules:

The Federal Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, make rules to carry out the purposes of this Act.

7. Modification of the law

Any law, executive order, rules or regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall be modified accordingly.

8. Removal of difficulties: If any difficulties arise in giving effect to any of the provisions of this Act, the Federal Government may make such order, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, for removing the difficulty.

STATEMENT OF OBJECT AND REASONS

The situation in the country is sadly reflective of dangerous conditions for journalists who risk their very lives to shine a light on the truth. Today, the journalists are tortured, harassed, killed or badly injured in the line of their duties. It is necessary to enact a law for in-time redress of the problems faced by journalists.

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