

New York - At least 44 journalists were killed in 2010 while carrying out their duties around the world, including eight in Pakistan as a result of suicide bombings and crossfire military strikes, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said Tuesday. The New York-based group,

which began compiling work-related deaths of journalists in 1992, said it was also investigating the deaths of another 31 journalists in 2010 to determine whether their deaths were connected with their work.

The eight killed in Pakistan topped the list of dead journalists, followed by five in Iraq and three each in Mexico, Indonesia and Honduras. Other countries with confirmed killings of journalists included Somalia, Thailand, Nigeria, Angola, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Cameroon, Belarus, India, Yemen, Uganda, Greece, Brazil, Lebanon and Rwanda.

Another four media workers, who were employed mainly by broadcasters, were also killed during their work, CPJ said.

Six of the 44 journalists killed were internet-based journalists, who CPJ said represented an increasing portion of the death toll since 2008. It said online reporters doing front-line work became targets only recently.

Sixty-one per cent of the 44 killed journalists were murdered for their work in 2010, lower than the average 72 per cent recorded in the last two decades. Other deaths were the result of crossfire in military operations and dangerous assignments.

Five of the 44 killed were international reporters while the rest were mostly local reporters. The five included Fabio Polenghi, an Italian freelance photographer, and Hiro Muramoto, a Japanese Reuters cameraman who was killed in Thailand during an anti-government protest.

The deaths of the eight journalists in Pakistan last year were a reflection of the violence that spread from Afghanistan to Pakistan, said CPJ's executive director Joel Simon.

'For many years, journalists in Pakistan have been murdered by militants and abducted by the government,' Simon said in the annual report. 'Journalists must put their lives on the line to cover a political rally, a street demonstration, or virtually any major public event.'

Simon said the number of 44 work-connected deaths remained high even though it was a decline from previous years.

'From Afghanistan to Mexico, Thailand and Russia, the failure of governments to investigate crimes against the press contributes to a climate of impunity that ultimately fuels further violence,' Simon said.

44 journalists killed for their work in 2010: Report

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The Pakistani journalists who were killed included Samaa TV cameramen Malik Arid, who died in a bomb explosion at a hospital in Quetta, and correspondent Azamat Ali Bangash, who died in a bomb explosion while covering a refugee camp in Orakzai.

CPJ said violence also injured over two dozen other Pakistani journalists.

In Mexico, where media representatives were targeted in the fierce drug war, three journalists were killed for their work. Seven of the 31 deaths still under investigation by CPJ also occurred in Mexico.

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