

SENATE OF PAKISTAN



**REPORT OF THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
ON
POINT OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE REGARDING CHARACTER
ASSASSINATION OF PPP LEADERS ON ELECTRONIC MEDIA RAISED BY
SENATOR ABDUL REHMAN MALIK IN THE HOUSE ON 28TH AUGUST, 2018**

REPORT NO. 07 OF 2020

**PRESENTED BY:
SENATOR FAISAL JAVED
CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE**

SENATE SECRETARIAT

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING ON THE POINT OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE REGARDING CHARACTER ASSASSINATION OF PPP LEADERS ON ELECTRONIC MEDIA RAISED BY SENATOR ABDUL REHMAN MALIK IN THE HOUSE ON 28TH AUGUST, 2018

I, Senator Faisal Javed, Chairman Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting have the honour to present, on behalf of the Committee, this report on Point of Public Importance regarding character assassination of PPP leaders on electronic media raised by Senator Abdul Rehman Malik in the House on 28th August, 2018 and referred to the Committee for consideration and report.

2. The composition of the Committee is as under:

1. Senator Faisal Javed	Chairman
2. Senator Sajjad Hussain Turi	Member
3. Senator Anwaar ul Haq Kakar	Member
4. Senator Khushbakht Shujat	Member
5. Senator Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah	Member
6. Senator Dr. Ghous Muhammad Khan Niazi	Member
7. Senator Kamran Michael	Member
8. Senator Pervaiz Rashid	Member
9. Senator Moula Bux Chandio	Member
10. Senator Rubina Khalid	Member
11. Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi	Member
12. Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizenjo	Member
13. Senator Atta ur Rehman	Member
14. Minister for Information and Broadcasting	Ex-Officio Member

3. The Committee considered the matter in its meetings held on:

- i. 5th October, 2018
- ii. 18th October, 2018
- iii. 7th January, 2019
- iv. 23rd May, 2019
- v. 3rd July, 2019
- vi. 29th January, 2020
- vii. 11th February, 2020
- viii. 9th June, 2020
- ix. 19th August, 2020
- x. 2nd September, 2020



4. Final consideration of the matter was held in the meeting dated 11th September, 2020, attended by the following:

1.	Senator Faisal Javed	Chairman
2.	Senator Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah	Member
3.	Senator Rubina Khalid	Member
4.	Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi	Member
5.	Senator Atta ur Rehman	Member
6.	Senator Abdul Rehman Malik	Mover

5. During the course of briefings, the Committee deliberated upon the matter in detail and sought views of the Mover, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Division, the concerned Federal Secretary and the Chairman PEMRA. The summary of the proceedings of the meetings on the subject matter are provided below.

6. The Mover Senator Abdul Rehman Malik maintained that there is a segment of press that focuses on media trial of political leadership leading to their character assassination. He added that fake news is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. He underlined that an amendment law is needed to ensure that media does not malign, ridicule or insult any individual and in such cases, the law should provide for legal mechanism to be taken against such media outlets including fines and penalties. He informed the Committee that he intends to bring a Private Member Bill in this regard. He further informed the Committee that he has noted that the trend of media trial and character assassination of the political leaders has lessened to a great extent since he had raised the matter. He demanded that PEMRA should be vigilant to monitor the media and take preventive measures against media trial of politicians.

7. The Chairman PEMRA briefed the Committee that PEMRA constantly monitors programmes and actions are taken against violation of code of conduct. Under Section 26 of the PEMRA Act, 2007, the Council of Complaints redresses complaints against any aspect of broadcast media or distribution networks. The Committee was presented with details of actions taken against electronic media channels for character assassination of parliamentarians and ridiculing state institutions. It was briefed that a complaint against Channel-92 had been lodged for airing a baseless news report about appearance of PPP leaders Mr. Asif Ali Zardari and his sister Ms. Faryal Talpur before



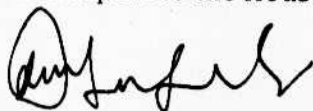
the FIA investigation team. After seeking explanation and detailed deliberations, a warning was issued to Channel-92.

8. The Minister for Information and Broadcasting Division was of the opinion that the right of freedom of expression does not allow defamation and slander of any individual. The Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Division informed the Committee that a National Media Policy is being designed and formulated. The proposed policy also includes mechanism to deal with fake news, defamatory content and character assassination of parliamentarians on electronic media. He assured the Committee that the draft of the policy will be shared with the Committee.

9. In view of the threadbare discussions, detailed briefings by the Ministry officials and perspective of the Mover, the Committee made following recommendations:

- i. The Information and Broadcasting Division shall submit draft of the National Media Policy which will be discussed in the Committee to ensure that a preventive mechanism is placed against fake news, defamatory content and character assassination of parliamentarians on electronic media;
- ii. The PEMRA shall submit a report to the Mover Senator Abdul Rehman Malik with the details of action taken against electronic media channels who telecasted defamatory content and fake news about PPP leadership.

10. The Committee with the consent of the Mover disposed of the matter for onward report to the House.



(ADNAN IBNE ASAD)
Secretary Committee



(SENATOR FAISAL JAVED)
Chairman Committee