

TOOLKIT

REPORTING MIGRATION IN PAKISTAN



Funded by the European Union



Co-funded by Germany



Federal Foreign Office

Implemented by



ICMPD

International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

1. HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT



This toolkit is for journalists who are working in or on Pakistan covering migration issues. It includes professional guidelines that are intended to provide a useful reference for journalists as well as International and national legal mechanisms relating to migration as ethical reporting must be grounded in fact. However, the journalistic principles discussed are intended as a good practice guide rather than hard and fast rules. They may need to be adapted depending on the local context.



2. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON MIGRATION



The following set of guidelines were developed by the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) in collaboration with the ICMPD through a series of online consultations conducted with journalists in Pakistan in late 2020. The guidelines address challenges that journalists said they faced when reporting on migration topics and support the development of ethical reporting practices when covering migration issues related to Pakistan.

1. Be accurate

Facts and data are at the heart of responsible reporting on migration. The United Nations, World Bank, ICMPD, IOM and ILO all have resources and tools to provide accurate and relevant data. Local sources include the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and the Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment.

Journalists cannot guarantee absolute truth but getting the facts right and presenting them in an objective way that considers both sides is the cardinal principle of journalism. We should always strive for accuracy, providing all the relevant facts and ensure that they have been verified. When we cannot corroborate information, we should let our audiences know.

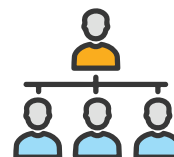
Be transparent about the source of information and whether it is official or unofficial. Where possible name all of your sources. Be careful too to protect the identities of vulnerable sources or those that choose to remain unnamed. The general rule of thumb is to use two or more sources and only one unnamed. Good sources on migration in Pakistan include:



**Official
statistical bodies**



**International
organisations**



**NGOs, think tanks,
consultancies
(though beware of
hidden agendas)**

Questions to ask yourself on accuracy:



01.

Have I given my audience accurate facts and new information or views that will help them understand the complexities of the story?



02.

When writing about migration some journalists find it hard to keep an independent position. They are moved by the stories of people and children in distress. But in order to give your reader an impartial and accurate picture you need to stand back and think carefully how you are telling the story. The best thing you can do for people in distress is to tell their story impartially and accurately.



03.

You are not a charity appealing for donations to help migrants. Nor are you the spokesperson of a political party who is against immigration. Keeping to the middle, independent line may not be easy, but it is vital to ethical reporting.

2. Know the law



Be fully knowledgeable of both national and international legislation that is relevant to migration. International migration law has no one legal instrument but covers the legal definitions and regulations related to migrants in areas such as regional arrangements, human trafficking and people smuggling, human rights, labour laws and maritime law.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol have been signed by 149 state parties. They define the term refugee and outline the rights of refugees, as well as the legal obligations of states to protect them. The core principle is non-refoulement which asserts that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom. This is now considered a rule of customary international law. UNHCR serves as the guardian of the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol. States are expected to cooperate with UNHCR in ensuring that the rights of refugees are respected and protected.¹ Pakistan is not a signatory to the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. Pakistan also has no official Refugee Law.

Also consider International Migration Law which refers to all of the laws which administer the movement of people across borders. Make sure you know who is considered to be a refugee under international law. According to UNHCR, refugees are persons outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder.

The International Labour Organization's Migration for Employment Convention protects migrant workers by guaranteeing their basic rights such as access to health care and the right to non-discrimination.²

1. Centre on International Migration, Remittances and Diaspora (CIMRAD). Pakistan Migration Report 2020.

2. <https://ijnnet.org/en/story/5-tips-reporting-migration-africa-%E2%80%94-and-around-world>

3. Use the right terminology and language



It is important to become familiar with the right language when reporting on migration. Consider the differences between emigration versus immigration. There are differences between a refugee and an asylum seeker. Climate migration and economic migration are both common phenomenon in Pakistan which require explaining. Also consider what an internally displaced person (IDP) is compared to a stateless person; and the difference between human trafficking and people smuggling.

Journalists must understand and use migrant definitions correctly. Consider these definitions from the IOM.



EMIGRATION

Leaving a country to establish usual residence in another country



IMMIGRATION

Entering a country to establish usual residence

Irregular/undocumented migrant: a person who moves or has moved across an international border and is not authorised to enter or to stay in a state pursuant to the law of that state and to international agreements to which that state is a party. Four non-regular and forced migrants may be identified in the context of Pakistan: (i) Refugees, especially from Afghanistan; (ii) Non-Afghan migrants in an irregular status in Pakistan; (iii) Pakistanis in an irregular status in other countries; and (iv) Pakistani deportees, forced returnees and trafficked migrants. (IOM)

Forced migration/involuntary displacement: a migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion or coercion. (IOM)

Used to describe the movements of refugees, displaced persons (including those displaced by disasters or development projects), and, in some instances, victims of trafficking.

Labour migrant/migrant worker: A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national. (IOM)

Family migration: family reunification of spouse, parent, children or other relatives; family formation or new marriage of a migrant with permanent residents or citizens; and family accompanying a family member entering at the same time as primary migrant. (IOM)

Unaccompanied minor/separated child: person below age of 18 who has fled alone or become separated from parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so. (IOM)

Asylum seeker: someone whose request for international protection and whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. A person waiting for a decision on his/her asylum claim.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs): persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to, avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border. (IOM)

Migration: the departure of a citizen for the purpose of employment in a trade or profession in any foreign country.

Migrant: any citizen who has migrated to a foreign country for the purpose of overseas employment in any work or profession and is staying in that country.

Internal migration: the movement of people within a state involving the establishment of a new temporary or permanent residence.

Regular migration: migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination.

Country of destination: a country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Country of transit: the country through which a person or a group of persons pass on any journey to the country of destination or from the country of destination to the country of origin or of habitual residence.

Smuggling of migrants: the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the irregular entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.

Trafficking in persons: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

4. Avoid sensationalism and stereotypes



It is important to check the negative impact of stereotyping and consider how it might encourage hate speech and racism. Migrants are often viewed, at best as undereducated or criminals, at worst terrorists. Not only should these perceptions be avoided but they should be actively challenged.

Avoid extremism. Take the time to judge whether inflammatory content about migrants or those who seek to limit migration can lead to hatred. Words like “swarms”, “floods” and “waves” should be treated with caution.

Reporters and editors must pause and take a moment to judge the potential impact of offensive, inflammatory content. The dangers of hate speech in journalism are well known and in many parts of the world have had tragic consequences. The following five-point test of hate speech (English and/or Urdu) for journalism in context has been developed by EJN and is based upon international standards. It highlights some questions to be asked in the gathering, preparation and dissemination of news and information that will help journalists and editors place what is said and who is saying it in an ethical context.

- Journalists have to scrutinise speakers and analyse their words, examine their facts and claims, and judge carefully the intention and impact of their interventions. It is not the job of journalists to adopt counter positions, but claims and facts should be tested, whoever is speaking. Freedom of speech is a right for everyone, including politicians and public figures, and it is the job of the journalist to ensure that everyone has their say, but that does not mean granting a licence to lie, or spread malicious gossip or to encourage hostility and violence against any particular group. When people speak out of turn good journalism should be there to set the record straight for all.
- A private conversation in a public place can include the most unspeakable opinions but do relatively little harm and so would not necessarily breach the test of hate speech. But that changes if the speech is disseminated through mainstream media or the internet. Journalists also have to consider the frequency and extent of the communication – is it a short momentary, intemperate burst of invective and hatred, or is it repeated deliberately and continuously? Answering the question of the newsworthiness and intention may be helped by considering if there is a pattern of behaviour or if it is a one-time incident. Repetition is a useful indicator of a deliberate strategy to engender hostility towards others, whether based upon ethnic, racial, religious or other form of discrimination.
- As part of the reporting process, journalists and editors have a special responsibility to place the speech in its proper context – to disclose and report what are the objectives of the speaker. It is not our intention to deliberately expose or diminish people with whom we disagree, but careful, ethical reporting always helps people better understand the context in which speech is made. The key questions to ask are: What are the benefits to the speaker and the interests that he or she represents? Who are victims of the speech and what is the impact upon them, both as individuals and within their community? Journalists have to judge whether the speech is provocative and direct, in what form it is made, and the style in which it is delivered. Lots of people have offensive ideas and opinions. That's not a crime, and it's not a crime to make these opinions public (people do it on the internet and social networks routinely), but the words and images they use can be devastating if they incite others to violence.
- Journalists must take into account the public atmosphere at the time the speech is being made. The heat of an election campaign when political groups are challenging each other and jostling for public attention often provides the background for inflammatory comments. Journalists have to judge whether expression is fair, fact-based and reasonable in the circumstances. Where we have doubt about directly quoting hateful speech it may be useful to report that insulting comments were made without repeating the exact terms of the insult.

5. Provide context and background



It is vital to consider and describe the circumstances that are driving people to leave their homes. When reporting on a migration event, consider the whole process and various aspects of migration as well the historical context and how this might have contributed to the situation. Afghan migrants are often fleeing insecurity and persecution in their home country, hence their movement into Pakistan. In Pakistan, internal migration is also an important and under covered story.

Reporting on migration issues is event-led in Pakistan and very few provide the needed context and background into the issue. With 24-hour news cycles and economic pressures rife in the media, these events will only remain newsworthy until the next big story evolves. This means that social phenomena like migration are never understood as a process. They are only ever seen as and when they occur, sometimes out of the blue. Stripping an event of its history and evolution also indicates a gap in knowledgebase which is being reflected both in news coverage and in newsrooms.

6. Include all perspectives in the stories



It is important to check the negative impact of stereotyping and consider how it might encourage hate speech and racism. Migrants are often viewed, at best as undereducated or criminals, at worst terrorists. For example, refugees crossing the Pakistan-Afghan border have been stereotyped as terrorists. Avoid these perceptions and challenge them whenever you can.

It is important to tell a migrant's story with humanity which is the essence of ethical journalism. What we publish or broadcast may be hurtful, but we should be aware of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others. Be sure to include official sources but also the voices of citizens and the migrants themselves. However, avoid oversimplification and framing the story in too narrow a way that takes no account of the bigger picture.

It is vital to consider and describe the circumstances that are driving people to leave their homes. Consider the whole process as well the historical context and how this might have contributed to the situation. Afghan migrants are often fleeing insecurity and persecution in their home country.

Internal migration is also an important and under covered story. Avoid stories that perpetuate bias against internal migrants – especially in cities such as Karachi where many migrants are considered to be criminals or perpetrators of religious violence, as this can create fear of certain ethnic groups or displaced people. Consider whether self-appointed community and migrant spokespeople are really representative and the different angles from which a migration story can be told. For example, talk to the communities that migrants are passing through or joining.

7. Remember that migration stories intersect with news



Although migration is an important topic in its own right, it is also important to think about where migration might intersect in other news stories. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on the living conditions and prospects of migrants and immigrants in Pakistan.

Labour migration and migrants to the Gulf has also been shaped by the pandemic and the impact of both on the Pakistani economy are all important stories.

8. Tell positive stories that focus on human rights



Focus on the strengths and solutions that are being offered rather than just on the problem. Migrants bring many skills and talents into a country as well as bringing back knowledge and expertise when they return to their home countries. Migration is a stimulus for economic growth. Work closely with NGOs, CSOs and academia to include a rights perspective.

The five-point guide for migration reporting developed by the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) provides another good base for reporting on migration.



Facts Not Bias:

Are we accurate and have we been impartial, inclusive and fact-based in our reporting? Are we acting independently from narratives that stem from politics and emotion rather than facts? Are we fairly and transparently reporting the impact of migration on communities?



Know The Law:

Do we articulate to our audience the rights migrants are due under international, regional and national law? Journalists must be fully knowledgeable about all legislation that is relevant to migration.



Show Humanity:

Humanity is the essence of ethical journalism. But we must keep our emotions in check, avoid victimization, over simplification and the framing of coverage in a narrow humanitarian context that takes no account of the bigger picture.



Speak for All:

Do we have migrant voices? Are we listening to the communities they are passing through or joining? Question how representative self-appointed community and migrant spokespeople really are.



Challenge Hate:

Have we avoided extremism? Have we taken the time to judge whether inflammatory content about migrants or those who seek to limit migration can lead to hatred? Words like “swarms”, “floods” and “waves” should be treated with caution, as should indiscriminate use of “racism” and “xenophobia.”

3. REPORTING ON MIGRATION – THE PAKISTAN CONTEXT



Migration in Pakistan – key facts and figures ³



- The Pakistani global diaspora was estimated at **9.1 million** in **2017** but this number still appears low with figures as high as **12-13 million** often mentioned.
- The Pakistani government's **Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE)** counts the number of economic migrants from **1971-2019** as **10 million**, the majority of whom were blue collar workers. Since the **1970s**, remittances sent back to Pakistan have become an important component of the national economy.
- Remittances have played a major part in easing the current account deficit and in recent years have almost equalled the country's total export of goods and services. Remittances have also played a critical role in reducing poverty especially in rural areas.
- The oil-rich Gulf region continues to be the main recipient of Pakistani workers, heading there on temporary, extendable work visas. About **95%** of the total outflow of workers from Pakistan is headed to the **Gulf countries**.
- The largest percentage of deportees come back from the Gulf countries, especially **Saudi Arabia**.
- Refugee migration from India to Pakistan was a defining feature of the creation of the new country in **1947**, when more than **six million** persons moved, comprising almost **one-fifth** of the total population of Pakistan in **1951**. The second major influx of refugees into Pakistan consists of those from **Afghanistan**. Starting at a sizeable level following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in **1979**, it was estimated that Pakistan received about **2.5 million** refugees during **1981-1990**, and the number went up to **3.3 million** by the end of **2001 (CSSR, 2006)**.
- Afghan refugees in Pakistan constitute one of the largest groups of persons in the world uprooted due to persisting armed conflict. A joint report of **UNHCR** and **IOM** that showed the number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan to be around **2.4 million** in **2018**.
- Pakistan is both a destination and transit country for migrants coming mostly from South Asia, but also from other countries like Somalia and Nigeria (**ICMPD, 2013**). It is mostly considered a transit point between destinations such as **Iran, Turkey, Greece, Central and Western Europe**.

3. 2020 Pakistan Migration Report. Centre on Migration, Remittances and Diaspora (CIMRAD). Available at: <https://www.gids.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Migration-Report-2020-Complete-Grayscale-1.pdf>

- Pakistan is reported to be a country of origin, destination, and transit for trafficking in human beings

Pakistan has built its foundations on a history of migration – and migration is a layered problem in the context of Pakistan. It is also one that is intersectional, which takes in disparate elements, and is connected in a myriad of ways.

Migrants, non-migrants and migration are defined in different ways in Pakistan, often depending on who defines it, who is being defined and for what purpose. This makes migration a deeply political subject.

There are many different terms that are used to signify the experience of ‘leaving home’ as both ‘leaving’ and ‘home’ can be understood in different ways. The term migration can encompass both the notion of migration abroad (often in search of economic opportunities) and that of internal migration.

National legislation, frameworks and relevant bodies



- The **Emigration Ordinance of 1979** is a well-established broad legal framework which governs labour migration and emigration in Pakistan which replaced the **Emigration Act of 1922**. Efforts at formulating, and adopting a revised policy are ongoing. A draft policy document on National Emigration and Welfare Policy for Overseas Pakistanis has been prepared and widely shared with stakeholders. This document must be presented to, and approved, by **Parliament** in order to provide an updated legislative framework for migration governance. The three pillars of the new policy are: (1) the promotion and expansion of safe, orderly, and regular migration; (2) Protection and welfare of overseas Pakistanis; and (3) Reintegration of return migrants. A **2012** amendment to the law provided a definition of an “overseas Pakistani”.
- The Bureau of **Emigration & Overseas Employment** is the regulatory body, controlling as well as facilitating and monitoring the overseas migration process, according to the Rules & Regulation framed under the Emigration Ordinance **1979**. It places Pakistani workers in overseas labour markets, legally and systematically. The bureau is the most important body formed under the law as it ensures smooth functioning of all legal and administrative elements of the Ordinance.
- The **National Vocational Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC)** and provincial Technical Education and **Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs)** are key stakeholders in producing a skilled labour force for Pakistan. An autonomous body which works under the **Federal Ministry of Education**, it coordinates its outputs with the Bureau in a taskforce.
- The **Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF)** provides social welfare to the overseas Pakistanis abroad and their families in Pakistan. It provides multiple services, including assistance with employment-related grievances; welfare programmes; educational facilities; housing schemes; health; and vocational training centres. It manages the Welfare Fund. It also assists overseas Pakistanis in time of distress, natural calamities, pandemics and conflict situations.
- **The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC)** is the official manpower exporting agency, mandated to deal with the demand for Pakistani workers by foreign governments.

- In 2018 Pakistan introduced two more laws which are of importance:
 - Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018
 - http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1528263640_822.pdf
 - Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018
 - http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1523536066_420.pdf

4. REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT



The following section on media regulation in Pakistan has been taken with permission from the Reporters Sans Frontieres Media Ownership Monitor.

The regulatory framework governing Pakistan's media sector has ended up engendering a media landscape that abounds with regulatory exceptions and prevents the professional development of the sector, discourages market fair-play and wantonly averts transparency and accountability. This restricts diversity in ownership and opens it to political vulnerabilities and potential manipulation of the media market.

Different sets of rules for different players (private vs public) rather than a level playing field

Pakistan's media regulatory framework is peculiar in its very nature, structure, mandate and application. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), which is mandated to regulate the radio, television and distribution services of electronic media in the country, can oversee only private sector media. The PEMRA Ordinance excludes existing and future operations of the government-controlled public sector electronic media from the purview of the regulator. By virtue of this exclusion, the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC), Pakistan Television (PTV) and Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company (SRBC) are free to operate and expand without any regulatory oversight.

These media establishments are operating under completely different sets of rules as compared to the private sector media. This exclusion of the state-run media from the purview of the PEMRA gives the government an undue advantage over private sector regulated media and distorts competition in the market, helping state-owned media to cannibalize the market from independent media. Moreover, private sector media, which is mainly dependent on official advertisements, is often vulnerable to editorial manipulation through expansion of 'non-regulated public sector media' without any regulatory check. Hence, different sets of rules for different players in the market are against the essence of 'level playing field' in the sector and defeat the very purpose of market regulations.

Focus on content regulators by media regulators rather than industry facilitation and supporting an enabling media environment

In principle, the sector-specific regulators such as PEMRA regulating the TV, radio and cable media, the Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) regulating the internet and telecom sectors, and the Press Council of Pakistan (PCP) regulating the print media are required to facilitate an enabling environment for all stakeholders in the sector. They are also mandated to ensure a fair competition in the market and provide multiple options to the consumers for quality services in the sector. Last not least they are expected to ensure that there is no 'undue concentration of ownership' by one or a few actors in the market.

However, judging from the MOM data, it appears that ownership even in the private media sector in Pakistan is heavily concentrated in a few hands. Unbridled 'cross-media ownership' has given more than 68% market control among the Top 40 media entities in terms of audience domination to only eight of market players. PEMRA in particular seems to have failed in ensuring 'level playing field' and 'fair competition' in the market.

On the contrary, instead of regulating the industry, the regulators have traditionally concentrated on content monitoring and censoring media on the behest of the state institutions and governments. This is evident from the fact that PEMRA has issued hundreds of show cause notices to TV channels on airing 'objectionable' content and imposed penalties thereon since 2017. However, there is no such notice taken by the authority on growing undue concentration of media ownership and monopolistic market domination.

Similarly, PTA, the telecom regulator, seems to be more active on blocking websites and online content instead of initiating and expediting the process of renewal of expired licenses for cellular companies in the country. The PCP, the print media regulator, on the other hand, is known for restricting its focus on content regulation and censorship and not taken any initiative to 'regulate' the industry at all.

Highly influenced by the government rather than exercising independence.

Autonomy and independence are essential characteristics of an effective regulator. The regulatory authority must be financially autonomous and independent from any 'regulatory capture' either by the state or the industry. However, it is interesting that two of the media regulators in Pakistan – PEMRA and PTA – have received massive revenues from the government during the past five years. For example, in the financial year 2016-17, PTA showed an official budget of PKR 30.9 billion (USD 292.8 million) in its audit report for the said year. PEMRA received PKR 816.9 million (USD 8.1 million) during the same period. These high cash values from the government instead of the market make them vulnerable to official control.

Nevertheless, despite massive revenue gains over the years, including steep license fee, these regulators have traditionally succumbed to the influence of the government rather than be dictated by the growing needs of an evolving media sector. This is mainly because of the fact that the government holds discretionary authority to appoint their board members. There is no space in the law for democratic process such as parliamentary oversight of these appointments. As a result, most of the board members of these regulators are handpicked by the government. Moreover, both of the regulators are under statutory obligation to comply with the directions of the federal government.

Limited resources and funds – only PKR 40 million (USD 400,000) for total expenditures of the Council were allocated in 2016-17; and no role in licencing of the newspapers industry.

All this has made these regulators either ineffective or best cases of ‘regulatory capture’ by State. The situation becomes critical when the entire market is facing undue concentration of media ownership and cross media ownership in particular (link Findings: cross-ownership). Control of a ‘a few’ players is much easier than many. Hence, the cross media ownership and regulatory capture by state has given massive control to the government over the information and freedom of expression.

‘Undeclared’, ‘unregulated’ and ‘invisible’ media

In principle, all the media in Pakistan must be regulated by independent and autonomous regulatory framework without any exception. However, alongside the state-run electronic media and PEMRA-regulated private electronic media, the media landscape in Pakistan reveals the presence of a major footprint of ‘undeclared’ and ‘unregulated’ media. FM 89.4 is one such example, which is neither licensed by PEMRA nor owned or operated by the state-owned Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) – a public funded statutory body to run Radio Pakistan (AM / MW transmissions) and a network of FM radio stations in the country.

The presence of ‘undeclared and unregulated’ media seemingly owned by the security establishment but not officially confirmed by anyone not only amount to distortion in the media landscape through accessing massive share in the revenue (private market and government advertisements) but also disregards statutory regulations.

While the regulatory laws exclude state-run media from its purview, the regulator has failed to extend its regulatory arm to this ‘undeclared and unregulated’ media, which is operating mysteriously without even having apparent linkages with the state-run PBC or PTV. Resultantly, the lack of professed identity manipulates the right to information enshrined in Pakistan’s constitution under Article 10A.

5. STORY IDEAS



Internal migration – In the case of Pakistan, the over-riding comprehension of migration and its associated phenomena tends to be focused on the issue of migration abroad. This isn’t the case and internal migration is an important story. Why are Pakistanis being forced to leave their homes?

IDPs – an on-going bias in the Pakistani media towards internal migrants, particularly in major cities such as Karachi, positions migrants from war torn areas as problematic and troublemakers, at best, with ‘Talibanisation’ used at worse. This needs to be addressed through accurate and ethical reporting which includes IDPs a sources and stories.

Refugees – society’s negative attitudes towards Afghan refugees have been aggravated by alleged connectivity with terrorist organisation. It has strengthened the perception that refugees and the movement across the Pakistan-Afghan border has allowed terrorists to cross into Pakistan. It has also led to racial stereotyping of what a ‘terrorist’ looks like. Ethical reporting can address these stereotypes.

Human trafficking – Anti-trafficking agencies like the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and the IOM are a good place to develop story ideas.

Gender/minority issues – Looking at migration through a gender lens can be a powerful way to enrich and add layers to your reporting. By adopting a gender approach, other stories can be found and told to enrich the existing narratives.⁴

Climate migrants – these groups come main from the coastal areas of Sindh, where sea intrusion has degraded deltaic land and pushed populations towards cities in search of a livelihood. Similarly, people from the Tharparkar and Kohistan regions of Sindh tend to migrate to nearby cities during long spells of drought and unemployment.

Human interest – It is vital to hear stories of struggle, survival and resilience from the person most affected by the topic, the migrants themselves. Migration coverage often revolves around politics rather than the migrants themselves. This approach has helped frame migration as a political debate, rather than an issue of human rights and social justice. By focusing on communities and people rather than on politics, journalists can also find other more human stories that need to be told.⁵

Business – Remittances, the recruitment business and the hidden and unaccounted costs of migration are often under-reported and make great stories. Look at stories around the successful use of remittances in community development.

Migrant success – Rather than focusing on problems, take a different look at the story – migration as a stimulus for economic growth. Migrants bring many skills and talents into a country as well as knowledge and expertise when they return home. Profiles of successful immigrants make good stories such as migrants turned entrepreneurs or families flourishing because of remittances.

Legal stories – Under-reported stories could be around about gaps in the legal and judicial system in ensuring the rights of migrant workers and the prosecution of human smugglers and human traffickers.

Untold stories – What are the main reasons migrants go abroad, come back, go again and the problems they face? Similar stories can be written around internal migration. Government officials, bureaucrats, policy makers, politicians, recruiting agencies, think tanks, development partners, international and UN agencies, national and international NGOs, migrant associations, public and private training institutes, trade union bodies, business leaders can all lend their perspective.

Immigration – Pakistan’s own migrant communities abroad, the social and cultural problems they face which have been heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic as well as issues related to people smuggling and deportations needs to be covered.

4. <https://brightthemag.com/ways-to-tell-migrant-stories-better-journalism-caravan-refugees-immigration-journalism-c0d006dcaacd>

5. <https://brightthemag.com/ways-to-tell-migrant-stories-better-journalism-caravan-refugees-immigration-journalism-c0d006dcaacd>

6. PITCHING YOUR STORY



Migration is an important story but it can sometimes be difficult to interest editors in publishing or broadcasting pieces, as Pakistani newsrooms are overstretched, numbers of reporters decreasing and many other big stories need covering.

One solution is to offer different angles for stories. It may be helpful to make clear that although migration is an important topic in its own right, it also intersects with other news stories. For example, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on the living conditions and prospects of migrants and immigrants in Pakistan. Labour migration and migration to the Gulf has also been shaped by the pandemic and the impact of both on the Pakistani economy are all important stories. Consider the following when pitching :⁶

1. Why is the topic important? Why should the audience want to go through it?
2. What makes it newsworthy? Why do we want to report on the issue now?
3. What information needs to be included? What angle would you like to use to tell the story?
4. What kind of information and data will you need to back up the story? Who are you going to speak with? What institutions would you like to contact?
5. Do you plan to use any special elements, such as infographics?
6. Emphasize the responsibility we have as journalists to uncover the truth and to tell authentic stories. Talk about the importance of promoting a more positive discourse that values freedom and human life
7. rather than national security and economic advantage. Talk about the responsibility we have as a society to uphold human rights and provide refuge to people
8. who are fleeing persecution. Point out how in-depth personal testimonies and interesting new angles make for compelling stories that
9. audiences may not have encountered before.
10. Share examples of good reporting on the issues, to show what impact it can have

Here are some other useful links for pitching stories (not only migration stories):

- Pitching to the New York Times <https://www.niemanlab.org/2018/10/how-to-successfully-pitch-the-new-york-times-or-well-anyone-else/>
- The International Journalists Network has some tips here. <https://ijn.net.org/en/resource/how-pitch-story-ideas-tips-journalists>.
- And the Global Investigative Journalists Network offers advice here. <https://gijn.org/freelancing-investigative-journalism-how-to-pitch/>

6. https://coveringmigration.com/learning_pages/pitching-stories-to-editors/

7. RESOURCES



Check out different situation reports, studies and policy briefs on migration by the government, international agencies, NGOs and associations of migrant workers in Pakistan including the Centre on International Migration, Remittances and Diaspora's (CIMRAD) 2020 Migration Report.

The United Nations, World Bank, ICMPD, IOM and ILO all have resources and tools to provide accurate and relevant data.

Local sources include the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and the Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment.

Check out the national census and national population and housing surveys.

The Panos South Asia Blog on South Asian journalist blog on migrant labour ⁷ has a collection of stories produced by South Asian journalists who are fellows of the project which aims to create and promote a migrant labour friendly environment through a common South Asian voice for reforms in the labour migration sector.

CIMRAD: <https://www.gids.org.pk/cimrad/>

The BEOE has published annual reports on the migration situation in the country since 2016. Some data is available at www.beoe.gov.pk

United Nations Population Division

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/>)

Eurostat

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/inde.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics)

7. <http://migration.panos.org/category/sending-country/pakistan/>

Gulf Labor Markets and Migration (GLMM) program of the Gulf Research Center and European University Institute (www.gulfmigration.eu). The second major program is the Global Migration Data Analysis Center (GMDAC) established by the IOM in 2016 (<https://gmdac.iom.int/>)

ICMPD International Centre for Migration Policy Development
<https://www.icmpd.org/>

ILO International Labour Organisation – Guidebook for Pakistan
<https://www.ilo.org/>

ICAT Inter-Agency Co-ordination Group Against Trafficking
<https://icat.un.org/>

MMD Migration and Mobility Dialogue (Africa)

OSCE Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<https://www.osce.org/>

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<https://www.unhcr.org/>

IOM International Organisation for Migration
<https://www.iom.int/>

OHCHR Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<https://www.ohchr.org/>

IDMC International Displacement Monitoring Centre
<https://www.internal-displacement.org/>

ICRMW Convention on Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers

GMG Global Migration Group
<https://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/>

GCIM Global Commission on International Migration
<https://www.iom.int/global-commission-international-migration>

CERD UN Commission on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
<https://www.ohchr.org/>

PICUM Platform International Co-operation on Undocumented Migrant
<https://picum.org/>



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Funded by the European Union



Co-funded by Germany



Federal Foreign Office

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