

SCENARIO 267

SAD EVENTS IN ENDING 2022

ARSHAD SHARIF KILLED...

Referring to '**the guardian**' of UK dated 24th October 2022;

Arshad Sharif, 50, a prominent Pakistani journalist who had fled the country, was shot to death in Kajiado near Nairobi in Kenya under circumstances that remained disputed till today. Kenya's national police service said it regretted the killing of a Pakistani journalist who had been living in hiding in the country and was shot dead in an 'incident of mistaken identity'.

On 23rd October 2022; the Nairobi authorities held that the Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif was travelling along with his two friends and their vehicle failed to stop at a police roadblock. In the weeks after the killing, Pakistani investigators began to describe the case as a 'planned assassination' orchestrated by Pakistani ruling elite in retaliation for Sharif's public criticism of their governance. However, despite high allegations, neither the Pakistani nor Kenyan police could officially identify the suspects.

Notably, the described failures were not so much a result of a lack of evidence, but rather seemed to be an attempt to protect their interests at the expense of the truth about Sharif's death. Soon enough in 2022, Sharif's widow and two unions of Kenyan journalists had filed a case against the Kenyan General Services Unit for their involvement in Sharif's shooting, but no evidence was there to substantiate their claims.

The analysts held that there were numerous holes in the story provided by the Kenyan police. They first maintained that Sharif's killing was a case of 'mistaken identity'; the police were tracking and attempting to stop a stolen vehicle that was being used to abduct a child, and they claimed they had mistaken Sharif's vehicle for that of the abductor. Subsequent investigations revealed that the abductor's car was a white Mercedes Sprinter 311 CDI, a utility van. Sharif's car was Toyota Land Cruiser, with a completely different number plate, and was heading in the opposite direction from the white van

the police were meant to be tracking. It was hard to believe the police had enough reason to open fire on a vehicle that did not resemble the model, number plate, or even travel-direction of their target vehicle.

Furthermore, the Kenyan police contradicted their original statement explaining how the incident took place. After originally claiming it as a case of mistaken identity, the police later asserted that shots were fired from Sharif's car, and that their own shots were defensive retaliation. Such an inconsistency called into question the credibility of the police's testimony and raised concerns of a possible collaboration between the police and those who had orchestrated Sharif's assassination from his own country.

BUT, why so big operation on foreign lands? Arshad Sharif originally had close relationships with Pakistan Army officials during his times as a journalist, but after the fall of Imran Khan's government, he started going suspicious and critical of the army's influence over Pakistan's political affairs – which was not a new thing for any media-person. As a journalist, Sharif had a ready platform to vocalize his concerns. He worked as a news anchor for Pakistan's ARY news channel, but the channel was made to cut ties with Sharif after he conducted a controversial interview with Shahbaz Gill, a close ally of Imran Khan, in which Gill directly criticized the Pakistani military.

Referring to a US magazine ***THE DIPLOMAT*** dated 8th February 2024:

"....transition from close military associate to strong opponent appears to mirror the case of (another) journalist Saleem Shahzad. He was originally close with several Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agents, but started to observe connections between ISI officers, al-Qaeda, and its affiliate the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)...."

Both journalists were originally close to the military, which likely made them both more of a threat as they were more familiar with military personnel than most other journalists. Sharif had also been interviewed for a documentary just before his death called '***Behind Closed Doors***', in which he gave certain evidences of then-ongoing corruption in Pakistan.

As Sharif continued with his criticism of the ruling elite including military, sixteen (16) First Information Reports (FIRs) were filed against him, which were significant as they involved criminal investigations but the fact-finding committee was presented only six (6). Amid the filing of those charges, Sharif started receiving death threats and decided to leave the country. He fled to Dubai, but they refused to sign off on his visa and threatened to deport him back to Pakistan if he did not leave within 48 hours; thus, Arshad Sharif could not seek refuge there.

A British Pakistani businessman in Dubai put Sharif in touch with a Pakistani living in Kenya, named Waqar Ahmed, who invited Sharif to stay in an apartment building he owned with his brother, Khurram Ahmed; this sudden last-minute arrangement might have sealed Sharif's fate. Khurram was the driver of Sharif's car when it supposedly hurried past a police checkpoint, which the police said warranted the shooting. Khurram survived the incident; Sharif did not. It remained unclear why the police would have targeted a passenger in the car rather than the driver if they believed the vehicle was being used to abduct a child.

Kenyan Police on duty opened fire on the Pakistani journalist and his driver-host after they allegedly drove through a security roadblock outside the Kenyan capital. They shot at the car nine times, hitting Sharif in the head. They were on the lookout for a van, which had been linked with a child kidnapping case - but not all similar to the vehicle fired at, according to the Nairobi police. The car had not stopped and proceeded with the journey, the Police chased and opened fire during which the car flipped over. Sharif's killing raised suspicions of foul play among observers, politicians and the press.

The journalist Arshad Sharif, who was a fierce critic of the Pakistani government, had fled the country in August 2022 and his whereabouts were not publicly known. Most of his friends knew only that he had spent time in Dubai and London. Kenyan Force's use of lethal violence had drawn concerns both nationally and internationally.

As given earlier, Arshad Sharif, who was once close to the military establishment, became one of its fiercest critics that year. ARY Network, one of the largest channels in Pakistan, which Sharif worked with, was taken off air after his show was accused of fanning '*anti-military sentiment*'. The channel later announced that it was parting ways with him. A court in Islamabad had asked Pakistan's intelligence agency and police in August 2022 to stop harassing Sharif after he lodged a petition through his lawyer saying the security forces were violating his fundamental rights. But he or his lawyer had nothing in hand as evidence to convince the court.

[Pakistan has long been unsafe for journalists. It ranked ninth on the Committee to Protect Journalists' 2020 global impunity index, an annual assessment of countries where journalists are regularly killed and the assailants go free.]

FINAL VERDICTS OF VARIOUS COURTS:

Press freedom groups, including the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), condemned the ongoing impunity nearly four years after his death, demanding tangible accountability rather than just financial compensation.

In July 2024, **the Kenyan High Court** ruled that Sharif's killing was illegal and arbitrary, rejecting police claims of mistaken identity. The state was ordered to pay 10 million Kenyan shillings (roughly USD 77,000) in compensation. However, no police officers were criminally charged.

Referring to the **daily TRIBUNE** dated 3rd February 2026: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) disposed of the murder case of senior journalist Arshad Sharif, explaining that the Pakistani and Kenya governments were already looking into the matter and there was no need for the court's involvement. The high-profile case, once handled by the Supreme Court (SC) under its *suo motu* jurisdiction, migrated to the FCC after the 27th Constitutional Amendment reshaped the judicial landscape, transferring authority over constitutional and *suo motu* matters to the newly minted court. A two-member bench comprising Justices Aamir Farooq and Rozi Khan Barrech conducted the proceedings.

An order, authored by Justice Farooq, noted that:

"Pakistan and Kenya had signed a mutual legal assistance agreement (MLA) and were coordinating at the diplomatic level to implement it. We are of the view that the authorities of both countries are taking appropriate action under their respective laws. Therefore, there is no need for any judicial interference in this regard when the law and investigation is taking its due course. (Thus) ... the instant suo moto action is disposed of. Accordingly, all pending applications are also disposed of."

Reacting to the verdict, Sharif's widow, Javeria Siddique, said she was disappointed by the order. *'The injustice and grief of Arshad's killing has broken me. The government's inaction and silence is deafening.'*

On 15th July 2026: Kenya's Supreme Court dismissed an appeal seeking to compel the prosecution of the officers involved in the 2022 killing of Pakistani journalist Arshad Sharif. Following a legal battle over the killing, the court ruled that prosecution decisions fall exclusively under Kenya's Director of Public Prosecutions, maintaining the current lack of accountability.

IMRAN RIAZ KHAN CASE:

A video was circulated at social media by someone on 11th May 2023, when Imran Riaz Khan was flying to Oman, after deciding to flee Pakistan when his house in Lahore was raided by the local police. He used to '*distill political affairs*' in his media videos - so he was picked up. His family was told by sources with the Punjab police that he was taken to the police station after being arrested at Sialkot airport. His younger brother named Usman, 32, told the media:

"When we inquired, the police said we released him that night. Police also claimed that he went away with a group of unknown people, and they don't know anything about him anymore. Police does not have any legal cases against him."

*However, an official complaint has been filed with police that CCTV footage from the police station showed the anchor being '**kid-napped by four to five masked men**' after being released."*

The lawyers held that despite having no grounds to keep him, the authorities were finding excuses to slow down the process and delay it; Imran Riaz's family filed an appeal then because during a court hearing on 22nd May - 11 days after he was arrested at the airport - the police repeatedly claimed that Imran Riaz Khan was not in their custody. Punjab's IGP [Inspector General of Police] told the court that he needed some days to solve the dilemma. The IGP later told that Imran Riaz Khan was not in police custody while declining to comment further since the case was ongoing with a subordinate court.

Federal Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb condemned any illegal action taken against individuals, while at the same time questioning Imran Riaz Khan's journalistic credentials. While responding United Kingdom's Channel 4 News, she said:

"Imran Riaz Khan is a political party spokesperson. You must draw distinction between a journalist and those who join a political party and incite violence. Don't mix them with those journalists who do serious independent reporting for media."

It also remained a fact that the YouTuber and commentator Imran Riaz had gradually earned a controversial reputation. Through his videos and statements, he was seen to be closely aligned with former PM Imran Khan and his political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf [PTI]. He was formally arrested after the former PM Khan was arrested on corruption charges and was granted bail in multiple cases by an anti-terrorism court in capital Islamabad.

GUN ATTACK ON IMRAN KHAN

On 3rd November 2022: Imran Khan, former prime minister of Pakistan, Chairman PTI, was shot in an assassination attempt in Wazirabad, a city of Northern Punjab, during the **2022 Azadi March II** against the Pakistan's PDM government. The gunman also injured a number of other PTI leaders while one party-supporter was killed.

In Pakistan, a political crisis was developed in March 2022 when the opposition Pakistan Democratic Movement [PDM] tabled a no-confidence motion against the sitting prime minister Imran Khan; Shahbaz Sharif came up as the new prime minister after success of No Confidence Move. Mr Khan had blamed his ousting on an 'American conspiracy' and labelled the new administration as an '**imported government**'.

This episode of attack surfaced during PTI's 2022 Azadi March-II, a march on Islamabad from Lahore which commenced on 28th October 2022, led and conducted by Mr Khan and his supporters to protest the government's refusal to hold early elections. On that day, while Khan was giving a speech in Wazirabad to his supporters, shots were fired by a gunman at Khan's container-mounted-truck; the truck was fired at six times and the gunman was immediately tackled. Khan was shot in the shin and thigh on the right leg and was immediately taken to Shaukat Khanum Hospital in Lahore, where he underwent treatment. X-rays and scans showed bullet fragments lodged in Khan's legs, and that his *tibia* was fractured but his condition was stable. In total, nine people were injured and one killed.

Immediately after, the Punjab Police announced that they had arrested the gunman who had shot Khan, identifying him as Muhammad Naveed. In a video shared by the police, the suspect stated that he shot Khan as he was 'spreading hatred and misleading the people', as well as making blasphemous and anti-religion remarks. He also stated that he was upset that Khan's march had been playing music and had been dancing during the Azaan. He added that he was acting on his own and only wanted to kill Khan.

The video was dismissed by Khan's allies as a '**cover-up**'. Later, the Punjab Police declared Naveed as a drug addict. Two other suspects were also arrested and were accused of providing an unlicensed pistol to Naveed for the attack, as well as selling other pistols and bullets to him for Rs: 20,000. Two PMLN activists were arrested, along with one Tayyab Butt, who was accused of helping Naveed obtain the pistol.

UK's daily **GUARDIAN**, on the same day (3rd November 2022), reported that: *'.....Video from the scene shows a gunman being taken down by another man as he tries to fire his gun, reportedly a 9mm automatic weapon, at Khan. In the panic the crowd start dispersing and some people chase and catch the attacker'.*

Protests erupted across Pakistan in the wake of that shooting, blocking main roads across the country and leading to massive traffic jams in many cities including the capital, Islamabad. Khan's aides said there would be further protests on Friday (next day). The attack happened in the Wazirabad district in Punjab province, where the former international cricket star's party PTI was in power. The former prime minister was travelling in a large convoy of Passenger-buses and cars heading towards Islamabad as part of his campaign aimed at forcing the government to hold early elections that could see him return to office. Faisal Javed, a Senator from Khan's party was also injured in the incident.

Zeeshan Bakhsh, a local reporter who was present at the scene, told the local media that: *'In the beginning, no one knew what was happening and some thought it was fireworks. After the first burst I saw someone lying on the ground ... everything happened in 15 seconds.'* Punjab police confirmed that seven people had been injured and one person, identified as Muazzam Nawaz, had been killed.

- *Pakistan has a long history of political violence. The former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on 27th December 2007 in a gun and bomb attack after holding an election rally in the city of Rawalpindi, next to Islamabad.*

Khan's first wife, Jemima Goldsmith, tweeted:

"The news we dread ... Thank God he's okay. And thank you from his sons to the heroic man in the crowd who tackled the gunman."

The attack happened a few days after Khan began his march from Lahore, the capital of Punjab province, along with thousands of supporters. Since his ousting in a no-confidence vote in parliament in April, Khan alleged that he was the victim of a conspiracy engineered by his successor, Shahbaz Sharif, and the US – the new premier and Washington both had denied it. PDM government's PM Shahbaz Sharif said in a statement: *"I condemn the incident of firing on PTI chairman, Imran Khan, in the strongest words. I have directed the interior minister for an immediate report on the incident. I pray for the recovery and health of the PTI chairman and other injured people."*

Khan's latest challenge to the government had come after Pakistan's election commission [ECP] disqualified him from holding public office for five years for allegedly selling state gifts unlawfully and concealing assets as premier. Khan has challenged the disqualification in a pending court case. Mr Khan had earlier claimed in May 2022 that his life was in danger and he had recorded a video in which he mentioned the names of all those who conspired against him. Sharif's government also said there will be no early vote and that the next elections will be held according to ECP's schedule.

Later, PTI members Asad Umar and Mian Aslam Iqbal released a statement, saying that Khan asked them to issue it on his behalf. They said that **'Khan believes there are 3 people on whose behest this was done – Shehbaz Sharif, Rana Sanaullah and one Gen Faisal Naseer'**. He was receiving information and was saying this on that basis. One day after Khan was shot, he stated **'I will give a call to march on Islamabad (again) once I get better'**.

In the leaked video of the shooter while replying to police officers' questions, the shooter said that he had only tried to kill Imran Khan who was misguiding people, citing that during the Long March, no break was observed for Azaan. Regarding another question — when he devised a plan to kill the PTI chief, he replied that he thought of it in the morning, and later changed his statement to 'from the date this long march had set off from Lahore'.

Referring to the daily **PAKISTAN TODAY** dated 10th November 2022:

"Former advocate general Ahmad Awais stated that releasing of the video to the media indicated 'a deep conspiracy — this video was aimed at building a certain narrative in the minds of the masses— this was meant to give it a religious colour'. Former IG Sarmad Saeed pointed out that the act would add confusion to this case. Meanwhile, despite the strict action by the CM, police released another video of the assailant in which the shooter made fabricated allegations to justify his attack on Imran Khan."

Some PTI leaders revealed that multiple gunmen also targeted ex-PM Imran Khan from some height and he was hit by four bullets, while some mentioned three bullets. The hospital administration disclosed that the medical board operated on Imran Khan's right leg, who suffered four injuries on the leg, and there was no bone damage. On 6th November instant Khan was discharged, while the medical board had advised him rest for ten days.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the chief of the JUI-F remarked that he had his doubts over the attack, labelling the incident a "**drama**", while some PDM leaders stated that Khan and PTI orchestrated this drama by themselves. Terming it a conspiracy, PTI leaders, including Fawad Chaudhry said that it was *'a well-planned assassination attempt on Imran Khan'*.

Although various contradictions were pointed out in this incident, which showed complications, yet reality remained that a murder attempt was made on Imran Khan. It raised various questions about the security lapse which needed attention. Since former PM Khan started addressing anti-government public rallies after his ouster, various official and non-official entities had issued threat alerts. Khan was repeatedly intimated about the threats to his life by the federal government. In this regard, a private TV channel had pointed out on 20th May 2022 that high-profile security officials had informed Imran Khan's Chief of Staff Shehbaz Gill about a possible attack on Khan.

Imran Khan had once said in a public gathering in Sialkot on 14th May 2022 that a conspiracy was being hatched to kill him and that he got recorded a video statement which would be released if he was murdered. According to a spokesman of the Interior Ministry, police and law enforcement agencies had already been directed to ensure security for him.

A media report on 21st June 2022 said the Provincial Counter Terrorism Department of Khyber PK had issued a threat alert about possible attack on Imran Khan. Another private TV channel indicated on 3rd November 2022 that in a classified letter, the CCPO Gujranwala expressed concerns regarding security issues overshadowing the Haqeeqi Azadi March two days earlier AND also warned of possible terrorist activity during the PTI political activities. The letter was forwarded to Chief Security Officer of Imran Khan, Lt Gen (retd) Asim and Security Coordinator to Imran Khan Shaneela Ali on 1st November 2022. Besides, the threat alerts were issued also by Punjab Home Department, Intelligence Agencies, and Punjab IGP. The CCPO had asked Khan to use a bulletproof shield and bulletproof-shielded rostrum, during his address in Gujranwala.

Meanwhile, Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr Justice Umar Ata Bandial on 7th November 2022 ordered IGP Faisal Shahkar to register an FIR of a gun attack on PTI chairman Imran Khan within 24 hours. During the hearing, Chief Justice Bandial said to the IGP, ***'It's been more than 90 hours but FIR has not been registered — the delay in FIR means evidence is being lost'***. But, the IGP informed the court that the provincial government was not allowing him to register the FIR of the said incident. Hinting towards the Punjab government's behaviour, Khan stated: *'Despite there being a coalition*

government, we have been unable to register the FIR of the (Wazirabad) attack for three days'.

Later, PM Shehbaz Sharif sought constitution of a 'full court Commission' of the apex court to probe into PTI chairman Imran Khan's allegations for the assassination attempt on him. In a meeting presided over by the Premier, it was decided that in the light of statement of the ISPR given on 4th November 2022, the federal government would initiate legal action against Imran Khan and other PTI leaders for issuing false statements against the state and its institutions. The ISPR had rejected the baseless and irresponsible accusations by the PTI chairman against the military. However, provision of fool-proof security was mainly the responsibility of the Punjab government.

INTERNATIONAL DENOUNCEMENTS:

Meanwhile, PTI's secretariat and media received calls from the international leadership in respect the attack on PTI's chief; little details were:

- **Canada:** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called the attack "completely unacceptable", saying that violence "has no place in politics, in any democracy, or in our society". He sent his condolences to the family of the deceased political worker who died during the incident.
- **Egypt:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attempted assassination and wished Khan a speedy recovery from his injuries in a statement.
- **India:** A spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs said that 'his country is closely keeping an eye on developments in Pakistan'.
- **Iran:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Nasser Kanaani condemned the assassination attempt against Khan and wished a speedy recovery.
- **Norway:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemned the attack on Khan.
- **Qatar:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the assassination attempt against Khan.
- **Saudi Arabia:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the assassination attempt against Khan.
- **Turkey:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered their condolences to Khan and the family of the one Pakistani killed in the attack, 'stressing the importance of peace and stability [in] Pakistan' in a statement.
- **United Arab Emirates:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the assassination attempt against Khan. In a statement, it said, 'UAE ex-

presses its strong condemnation of these criminal acts that aim to destabilize security and stability, and are inconsistent with humanitarian values and principles'.

- **United Kingdom:** The Minister of State for Asia, Energy, Climate and Environment and Khan's former brother-in-law, Zac Goldsmith, called the attack appalling and said, '*Imran Khan is strong and will soon be back on his feet*'.
- **United States:** The White House strongly condemned the attack on Khan.

SHOOTER SENTENCED TO DEATH:

On 25th April 2025: An anti-terrorism court of Gujranwala awarded two life imprisonments and another 95-year jail term to the shooter who attacked former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan and other party leaders during a protest rally at Wazirabad against the then PDM government in 2022; Judge Naeem Saleem pronounced the landmark verdict.

The attack on former Prime Minister Khan took place on 2nd Nov 2022, in Wazirabad, near Gujrat, when he was leading an anti-government rally from Lahore to Rawalpindi. Mr Khan was on top of a truck when the gunman opened fire. A PTI worker, Moazzam Cheema, was killed while at least 11 PTI leaders, including Mr Khan, MNA Ahmed Chatha, Senator Faisal Javed, were injured. Three men were arrested for their alleged involvement in the attack — Naveed Araen, Tayyab Jahangir Butt and Waqas.

The ATC convicted Naveed Araen, while the other two suspects were acquitted for want of evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt. Naveed was awarded life imprisonment along with a fine of Rs1 million under Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, which outlined punishments for acts of terror. A separate 95-year jail term and Rs2.2m fine were awarded over other charges.

The lawyer for the convict, Advocate Mian Dawood, announced that the sentence would be challenged in the Lahore High Court, citing alleged irregularities in the prosecution's arguments and evidence pertaining to the accused. The three suspects remained in custody since their arrest from the crime scene moments after the attack.

The shooter, Naveed, was overpowered by a local PTI worker while firing at Mr Khan's truck. The three men were booked by the Wazirabad police under sections 302 (premeditated murder), 307 (attempt to commit murder) and

440 (mischief after causing death or hurt) of the Pakistan Penal Code and Section 7 of the Anti-terrorism Act.