Pakistan must probe intelligence agencies as body of journalist is found

Any investigation into the abduction and reported death of Pakistani journalist Saleem Shahzad must include the country's feared security and intelligence agencies, especially the ISI, Amnesty International said today.

The body of Saleem Shahzad, who went missing on Sunday 29th May, was found close to his abandoned car in the north-west of the country, Pakistani media reports say. Reports also suggest that evidence of torture was found on the body.

"Pakistan's intelligence agencies face serious allegations that they been involved the numerous killings of activists, lawyers and journalists," said Sam Zarifi, Asia-Pacific Director at Amnesty International.

"Early indications from this case suggest an alarming expansion of the 'kill and dump' operations previously seen mostly in the Balochistan province."

"The Pakistan authorities must hold those responsible to account and protect journalists targeted merely for doing their jobs."

Saleem Shahzad had published an article on the 27th May reporting on a terrorist attack at a Pakistan Naval base, and alleging links between al-Qaida and Pakistan Naval officials.

Amnesty International has since July 2010 documented the disappearances and killing of at least 100 activists, journalists, lawyers and teachers in Balochistan, with victims' relatives often blaming the security and intelligence services.