

Dangerous Assignments

covering the global press freedom struggle

Fall | Winter 2006

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Special Anniversary Edition

Featuring

stories by

Victor Navasky •

Geraldine

Fabrikant Metz •

Jane Arraf •

Richard Pyle •

Jim Muir •

Roy Gutman •

Joel Campagna •

Carlos Lauría •

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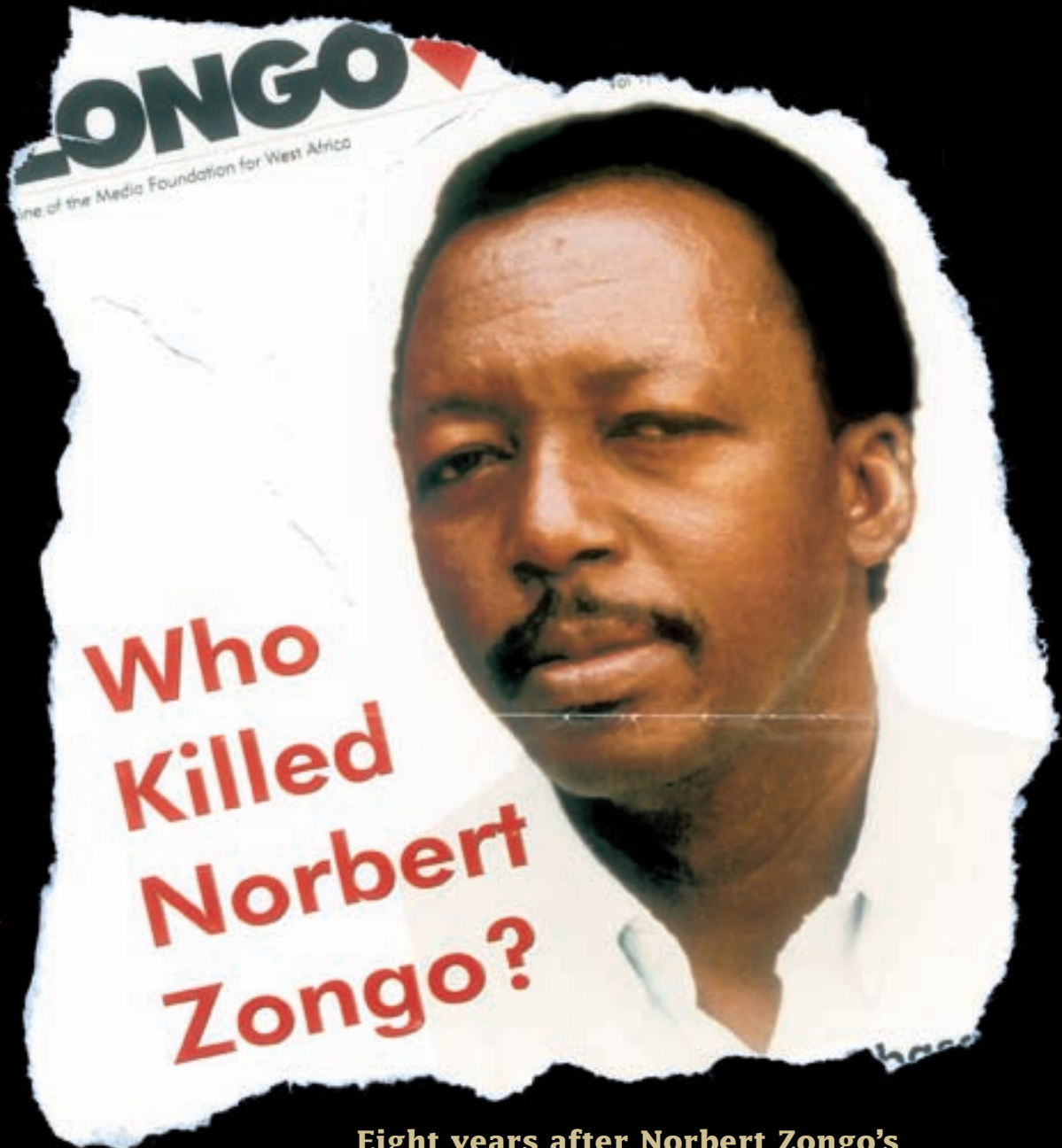
Rodríguez •

Michael Massing •

Josh Friedman •

Dave Marash •

Ann Cooper •



Eight years after Norbert Zongo's murder, his killers are unpunished. He is among hundreds of journalists slain worldwide, many on the orders of government officials. ...

Deadly News • A CPJ Investigation



Dangerous Assignments

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Twenty-five years ago a couple of young journalists in New York had an unlikely idea. They would assemble a group of well-known American journalists and write letters on their behalf urging dictators and despots to stop persecuting the press. They composed the first letters on a typewriter, stuffed them in envelopes, licked the stamps, and dumped them in a mailbox. The dictators didn't generally send replies, but the letters also went to reporters around the world who wrote stories about the abuses. Some jailed journalists, as it turned out, were released as a result.

Today, press freedom is a worldwide movement, and CPJ is a leader among dozens of international, regional, and local organizations fighting for the rights of journalists in cities and villages across the globe. Local journalists played critical roles in each of the great transformations of the last quarter century—the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the restoration of democracy in Latin America, the economic opening of Asia—and CPJ was there to support them.

On these pages, you'll see stories by the guardians of this movement, people who have devoted much of their professional careers to furthering freedom of the press. And you'll read about the front-line journalists who are the heroes of our story.

They are people like Norbert Zongo, the Burkinabé journalist featured on the cover of this issue, who was slain while investigating government wrongdoing. They include Zeljko Kopanja, an editor who lost both legs in a bombing that sought, unsuccessfully, to silence his coverage of the murders of Bosnian Muslims. And they are people such as Anna Politkovskaya, the tough-minded Russian reporter whose contract-style murder this October shocked people around the world. Many of the writers, photographers, editors, producers, and camera operators described in these pages didn't set out to change the world. They wanted, simply, to cover the news, and they ended up risking their lives, their liberty, and their reputations.

Because of the dedication of all of these people, most governments today recognize that international legitimacy requires some level of press freedom. That is a major step in just 25 years. But many governments pay only lip service to a free press. China and Cuba, the world's top two jailers of journalists, call the people they hold in prison "mercenaries" and "subversives." Worldwide, journalists are killed for their work more than three times every month. This 25th anniversary edition of *Dangerous Assignments*, while celebrating the successes of the press freedom movement, should also remind us that its gains are tenuous.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joel Simon".

Joel Simon

The Committee

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Terry Anderson
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Sandra Mims Rowe, John
Seigenthaler, Paul C. Tash, and
Mark Whitaker.



On the cover:
In a poster first printed in 2000, the Media Foundation for West Africa

demanding to know who killed the Burkinabé editor Norbert Zongo. The question posed by the press freedom group has yet to be addressed by the government in Burkina Faso.

Poster courtesy of the Media
Foundation for West Africa

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Press freedom through the eyes of cartoonist Mick Stern.

The Third Signature

When Michael Massing came calling, an editor became an advocate.

By Victor S. Navasky

In early 1980, during my third year as editor of *The Nation*, I received a call from Michael Massing, the 27-year-old executive editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. He had an idea, and could we talk?

We could and did, and the basic idea was this: In the United States, journalists had the American Civil Liberties Union and various other groups to protect their interests. But journalists in other countries had no such organization to look out for them, and they were under frequent attack. Why didn't we set one up on their behalf?

As it turned out, Massing, a graduate of Harvard with a master's degree from the London School of Economics, had more than an idea. He had a colleague, Laurie Nadel, by then a writer for CBS. They had a lawyer and a set of papers. The lawyer had informed them that to incorporate as a non-profit organization they needed three signatures (a president, a treasurer, and a secretary). Would I be the third?

It seems the idea was hatched after Massing commissioned Nadel to do a piece on Alcibiades González Delvalle,

Victor Navasky is publisher emeritus of *The Nation*, chairman of the Columbia Journalism Review, and director of the Delacorte Center of Magazine Journalism at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. His most recent book is *A Matter of Opinion* (Picador USA, 2006).

a Paraguayan journalist who was touring the United States under the auspices of the U.S. Information Service, an arm of the State Department. The peg: While here, the 43-year-old journalist was served with a warrant for his arrest. The charge: "Undermining Paraguay's legal system by writing an article detailing the poor treatment of prisoners."

A vocal and principled critic of Paraguay's dictator, Alfredo Stroessner, González insisted on going home to face the charges. Shortly after he returned to Asunción he was imprisoned. And shortly after that, in violation of all the canons of objectivity that are taught at the esteemed Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, which publishes *CJR* (and where I happen to teach), Massing and Nadel agreed, "We've got to help this guy."

But wherever they turned, help was unavailable. The ACLU didn't operate abroad. The Overseas Press Club was not in the protest business. The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press had its hands full fighting for the freedom of the U.S. press. And the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders would not be founded for another five years. But Massing and Nadel did what they could. That included notifying The Associated Press and Reuters, along with Warren Hoge, *The New York Times* correspondent in Brazil, and nongovernmental organizations in Paraguay.

As Joel Simon, CPJ's executive director, recently pointed out in an article in *World Policy Journal*, Hoge quoted González's attorney as saying, "Pressure from abroad is the only power the (Stroessner) dictatorship respects." Nadel wrote her story for *CJR*. González, after 70 days in jail punctuated by more unfavorable international publicity than the regime anticipated, was freed and resumed his column. And the idea of CPJ was born.

Massing persuaded Anthony Lewis and Harrison Salisbury of *The New York Times*, Mary McGrory and Coleman McCarthy of *The Washington Post*, Jane Kramer of *The New Yorker*, Peter Arnett of The Associated Press, and others to join the CPJ board; we were all jubilant when Walter Cronkite, who exemplified the moral conscience of the establishment press, responded to an invitation to become honorary chairman.

Having been lobbied by Dan Rather (who in turn was lobbied by Nadel), Cronkite pointed out that he never lent his name to anything in which he was not active, and that his schedule prevented his being active in anything. But because this project was so critical and close to his heart he would make an exception. Dave Marash, then a WCBS anchor in New York, came up with the name Committee to Protect Journalists (which, after all, is what we were), and Alice Arlen of the Alicia Patterson Founda-



Courtesy Simon Winchester

British journalists, from left, Ian Mather, Tony Prime, and Simon Winchester in a police station in Ushuaia after their arrest during the Falklands war in 1982.

A note from Mather thanks the committee for its advocacy.

tion found some temporary space (the Alicia Patterson offices, opposite Grand Central Terminal). Eventually, Aryeh Neier arranged for CPJ to sublet an office just around the corner in the new headquarters of the organization that would become Human Rights Watch.

With an office that consisted of a couple of used typewriters, some secondhand furniture, and a part-time volunteer executive director, CPJ had some bumpy early months. For example, when its enthusiastic director Peggy Seeger wanted to take a Spanish language course (at a moment when a high percentage of cases were in Latin America) she had no boss to authorize the expenditure. What to do? She enrolled, and Massing recruited Marash to serve as chairman so the executive director would have someone to report to. The board was strengthened and enlarged, and the Ford Foundation put up some seed capital. CPJ set up a research arm and began to send the missions for which it has become known to journalistic trouble spots around the world.

From Massing's perspective, CPJ, which had built up a mailing list of 200 to 300 names, came of age with the Falklands war. Three British journalists—Ian Mather and Tony Prime of

London's *Observer* and Simon Winchester of *The Sunday Times*—had been arrested on false charges of espionage. "Everyone had the attitude that because these guys had big publishers behind them, they would be released," Massing recalls. But almost two months had passed and they were languishing in jail, ingesting what Winchester described as "a memorable chicken-feet soup." Neier, who worked down the hall, came into the office and said, "We have to do something."

And so they did. As Massing remembers it, "We typed out a fact sheet and sent a protest on our letterhead to the minister of justice and the foreign minister of Argentina, signed by Walter Cronkite, and we sent an additional letter to our list of 300. I remember licking the stamps at the central post office."

In fact, among those who had tried to help spring the three British journalist-felons before CPJ's intervention were the Swiss government, the pope, and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar, all to no avail. "And then," as Winchester has written, "came a letter from Walter Cronkite on the stationery of the Committee to



Protect Journalists."

The three were soon released and to this day they credit CPJ with "providing a spur to our morale all those years ago," not to mention playing a role in their release.

In the years since, Laurie Nadel has left journalism and CPJ, earned a doctorate in psychology, and become a best-selling author, therapist, and life coach. Michael Massing has won a MacArthur Fellowship (popularly, and in his case appropriately, known as the "genius award"), continued as an active member of CPJ's board and executive committee, and carried on his career as an author and perhaps America's leading critic of press coverage of the Iraq war (writing in *The New York Review of Books*, among other publications). And CPJ, which has inspired imitators around the world, has gone on to become, well CPJ. ■

25 Milestones

Press freedom, 1981-2006.

1 May 18, 1981: CPJ is incorporated as a nonprofit for “the protection of the human and professional rights of journalists throughout the world.”

2 March 1982: CPJ carries out its first mission, traveling to Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. (Story, page 74.)

3 June 1982: CPJ helps win release of three British journalists held by Argentina on spy charges during the Falklands war. (Stories, pages 4, 62.)

4 March 1985: Mikhail Gorbachev (below) takes power in the Soviet Union and ushers in a new policy of openness, or glasnost. By allowing criticism of the government and its officials, the policy opens vast opportunities for press freedom.



Reuters

5 March 16, 1985: Hezbollah militants abduct Associated Press correspondent Terry Anderson in Lebanon. He is freed nearly seven years later, in December 1991, and later joins CPJ as honorary co-chairman. (Profile, page 14.)

6 December 17, 1986: Guillermo Cano, editor of Colombia’s *El Espectador*, is assassinated in front of his office by hit men for drug lord Pablo Escobar. More than 50 Colombian journalists are killed over the next two decades. (Profile, page 15.)

7 May 8, 1989: *Gazeta Wyborcza* is launched in Poland, becoming the country’s leading independent newspaper of the post-communist era. (Profile, page 25.)

8 October 1991: CPJ names its first International Press Freedom Awardees: Soviet Tatyana Mitkova, Guatemalan Byron Barrera, Cameroonian Pius Njawe, Americans Bill Foley and Cary Vaughan, and imprisoned Chinese journalists Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming.

9 June 2, 1993: Tahar Djaout is the first journalist killed in Algeria’s civil war. A spree of killings follows, claiming the lives of 58 journalists over three years.

10 May 3, 1994: The first World Press Freedom Day is commemorated.

11 December 13, 1995: Nobel Peace Prize nominee Wei Jingsheng (below) is sentenced to 14 years in prison in China after speaking out for democracy and human rights. Two years later, after the Clinton administration intervenes, he is freed and sent to the United States.



AP

12 November 1996: Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko tightens his grip on the media, blocking broadcasts, denouncing journalists, and appointing loyalists to state-owned media. It signals the start of a post-Soviet, authoritarian pushback. (Drawing the Line, page 88.)



AP

13 June 1998: Sixteen journalists are released from prison following the death of Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha (above). The country’s private press later reasserts itself as a robust voice for Nigerians.

14 October 4, 1998: After a forced absence of four years, *Tempo* magazine resumes publication in Indonesia. Coming after the fall of authoritarian President Suharto, it signals the rebirth of the country’s independent press. (Profile, page 26.)

15 January 8-17, 1999: Eight journalists are killed in Sierra Leone when rebels take the capital, Freetown. It is the deadliest two weeks for wartime journalists in CPJ’s history.

16 April 20, 2000: Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (below) attacks the reformist press in a speech accusing journalists of “undermining Islamic and revolutionary principles.” It triggers a wave of newspaper closures, decimating the country’s pro-reform press.



AP

17 September 16, 2000: Ukrainian Internet editor Georgy Gongadze is kidnapped and beheaded. Allegations of involvement later reach President Leonid Kuchma’s office and help push him from power. (Related story, page 30.)

18 September 18, 2001: Eritrean authorities launch a massive crackdown, shuttering the entire private press, arresting more than a dozen independent journalists, and driving many more into exile. (Story, page 64.)

The Committee | As It Happened

19 January 23, 2002: *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl (below) is kidnapped in Karachi, Pakistan, and murdered a week later. Terror-inspired kidnappings continue in South Asia and the Middle East.



AP

20 March 18-19, 2003: Cuba’s government arrests 29 independent journalists on antistate charges, later sentencing them to up to 27 years in jail. (Related story, page 66.)

21 March 22, 2003: Paul Moran, a cameraman on assignment for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, is killed in the northern Iraqi town of Gerdigo, becoming the first confirmed journalist fatality of the conflict. (Related story, page 45.)

22 June 22, 2004: Francisco Ortiz Franco, co-editor of the Tijuana weekly *Zeta*, is slain by drug traffickers amid a spree of attacks on Mexican journalists. CPJ later persuades President Vicente Fox to name a special prosecutor for crimes against the press.

23 August 3, 2004: In a precedent-setting case, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights overturns the criminal libel conviction of Costa Rican reporter Mauricio Herrera Ulloa, saying it “violated the right to freedom of thinking and expression.” CPJ and a coalition of press and human rights groups argued in his behalf.

24 September 20, 2005: With the murder of Firas Maadidi in Mosul, the number of journalists killed in Iraq reaches 59, surpassing the Algerian death toll and making Iraq the deadliest conflict for journalists in CPJ’s history.

25 April 7, 2006: CBS cameraman Abdul Ameer Younis Hussein is freed a year after being detained by U.S. forces in Iraq. He is the last to be released from among at least seven Iraqi journalists jailed by the military in 2005 and held for months without charge. ■

Dinner at the Waldorf

A black-tie benefit becomes a fixture on the New York media calendar—and a reminder of the sacrifices made by journalists worldwide.

By Geraldine Fabrikant Metz



Joseph Lelyveld, left, shown with fellow Burton Benjamin Awardee John F. Burns, says the dinner serves as a reminder of the long struggle against repression.

For Zeljko Kopanja, accepting his International Press Freedom Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists was a difficult and painful task. But he was determined to attend the annual benefit dinner and walk up the steps to the stage of New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel by himself to claim the award.

Kopanja, co-founder and editor of *Nezavisne Novine*, an independent daily in Bosnia Herzegovina, had lost both of his legs when a car bomb went off outside his home in Banja

Geraldine Fabrikant Metz is a staff writer for The New York Times and a CPJ board member.

Luka in 1999. The bomb was an attempt to silence the Bosnian Serb journalist whose paper had been aggressively chronicling Serbian murders of Bosnian Muslims.

Kopanja would not give up. He would not be silenced. His decision to accept CPJ's award himself, struggling to reach the stage with the use of prostheses, reflected his attitude to his life's work, which he continued without the use of his limbs. That November evening in 2000, the 46-year-old journalist told the 800 guests that it was "worth sacrificing a part of me for the truth, since without ascertaining the truth there is neither peace nor freedom."

CPJ's annual dinner celebrates some of the world's bravest journalists. Many have served time in prison for their work. One honoree, Cuban Manuel Vázquez Portal, told the audience that he came to New York with "the smell of jail on my skin."

Two honorees ultimately lost their lives because of their fierce drive to reveal the truth. Veronica Guerin, the Irish reporter who covered the activities of organized crime in Dublin, won a press freedom award in 1995. Just one year later, she was murdered by those she threatened to expose.

Mazen Dana, a Palestinian photographer, was honored in 2001 for his photojournalism on the front lines in Hebron. Dana, the first cameraman to receive the award, had already been wounded several times in the course of his work. He was killed two years later when a U.S. soldier shot him while he was working in Iraq.

For American journalists, the evening is a powerful reminder of how crucial the daily work of reporting can be in countries where oppressed people are seeking freedom.

"I had a magazine editor tell me that, 'This is the night each year when I feel best about being a journalist,'" recalled Ann Cooper, former CPJ executive director. "You are reminded of just how important journalism is all over the world."

For hundreds of other guests who know little about journalism, or even

why journalists do what they do, the evening provides vivid examples of how reporters struggle against deeply corrupt governments around the world to help make freedom more than a dream. Many of these journalists come from places and experiences that most of us could not imagine. In some instances, the spotlight of the press freedom award has helped to save them.

Vázquez Portal was finally released from a Cuban jail in 2004 after an aggressive campaign on his behalf that included efforts by CPJ. Today, the power of the committee and its central role in battles to help journalists around the world is enabled in large part by the \$1.3 million raised at the annual dinner. That amount accounts for about 45 percent of the annual budget.

When the benefit was initiated 15 years ago, a decade after the birth of the committee itself, it was not nearly the stellar, or lucrative, event that it has become.

"There was not a lot of enthusiasm at all for it," recalled James Goodale, then the committee's chairman and still a board member. "It was a black-tie evening and there was a lot of debate about whether it was appropriate for journalists to dress up in black tie for an elegant event when they were discussing press freedom."

Goodale remembers worrying that some friends he had asked to attend the event, initially held at the Pierre Hotel, "would be angry at me for getting them to go to a benefit that they didn't like." But when a prominent guest told him that she had been "knocked out" by the evening, he said, "that made me realize that we were on to something."

Even with some positive initial reaction, the first years were disorganized. "When Barbara Walters walked in as a guest at the Pierre, I walked up to her and said, 'How would you like to introduce some of the foreign journalists,'" Goodale recalled. "She said that she would be thrilled to



Bosnian Serb editor Zeljko Kopanja is greeted by CPJ board member Kati Marton as he reaches the stage.

do it. We did not have a stage. I stood next to my table to make the introductions and no one would shut up—but it worked."

Still, the evening needed an experienced director. So after NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw got up one night and quieted the crowd, he ended up running the program for several years, Goodale said.

Of course, the emotional impact of these evenings meant that many went on far too long. Some ran past 11 p.m. as recipients spoke movingly of what they had been through and how much the award meant to them. Ultimately, Cooper and others hit on a plan to give presenters and recipients time limits and to assist in editing their speeches.

Whatever their length, the dinners are always powerful events. They also serve as important reminders, said

Joseph Lelyveld, former executive editor of *The New York Times* and recipient of CPJ's annual Burton Benjamin Memorial Award for lifetime service. "In country after country," he told a rapt crowd in 2001, "repression actually wins for years, even decades at a time. When these people come face to face with a demand that they silence themselves, they know their duty: They publish, they broadcast at great personal risk." In the United States, he said, journalists do not face threats to their lives or livelihoods. For them, "the duty is to find out what is really going on and to commit resources to uncovering what's being unreasonably withheld in the name of national security."

It is also our obligation to help journalists around the world do their jobs. That is the mandate of the Committee to Protect Journalists and the reason that the annual dinner is so crucial toward delivering that aid. ■

Challenges in a Dangerous World

CPJ's early leaders look ahead at emerging dangers, from Iraq to China.

Led by **John Carroll**, former *Los Angeles Times* editor and now Knight visiting lecturer at the Shorenstein Center at Harvard, CPJ's early board members and former directors spoke out on the challenges facing the press during a two-week online discussion in July. Here are excerpts:

IRAQ

Peter Arnett: Today and in the years since CPJ was created, journalists hoping for a career overseas face perils that did not exist when I began my foreign coverage in Southeast Asia in the mid-1950s. We traveled through the troubled post-colonial world wearing our press passes like body armor and rarely faced an issue more dangerous than expulsion. ...

Bearing this in mind, coverage of important components of the Iraq war—the Sunni insurgency, al-Qaeda in

Iraq, and the Shiite militias—falls short of what would be desirable in this multimedia age. So did coverage of the Khmer Rouge in its heyday fall short, as did efforts to cover the Lebanese militias then and now. ... But it seems to me that the full dimensions of the war's terrible impact on the Iraqi people is being well covered by the international media, as is the convulsive political story. And the past three years have seen the recruitment and training of a superb cadre of Iraqi journalists who have been hired to support the international coverage effort.

STRINGERS and FIXERS

Josh Friedman: It used to be that big rich media enterprises had plenty of full-time people running around the world. Now, the number of full-time American journalists overseas is relatively small. Local freelancers are mak-

ing up the difference and, thus, must be given a new employment status. ...

Traditionally, what separated freelancers, fixers, drivers, and interpreters from big-footed full-time staffers were corporate benefits and extras. That may have been fine as long as the difference meant retirement pay, but that was the old days and things are different. Now corporate benefits like insurance and money to pay for bodyguards, hardened cars, and a safe place to stay overnight are often necessities.

CHINA and INTERNET CENSORSHIP

Jane Kramer: We have governments in most of the industrialized world that, whatever their rhetoric about censorship, are desperate to be competitive in world markets. And we have Internet giants whose "moral obligations" go by the board in the

kind of market China represents. We have tended to assume that whatever we mean by "globalism" was going to spread respect for a public sphere—or at least an acknowledgment that free speech and the market have some connection—but it seems to have spread mainly the protection of financial and political interests. If it's hard to shame the Chinese government, it may be equally hard to shame the Internet providers we have come to depend on. But we should give it a shot. That's our responsibility—to keep up the pressure against this sort of collusion.

U.S. PRESS STANDARDS

Anthony Lewis: For at least 70 years, since the U.S. Supreme Court began giving broadly protective interpretations to the speech and press clauses of the First Amendment, this country has had greater freedom of expression than any other. That is still true in legal doctrine.

What is different today is political pressure to silence or punish probing, critical journalism about the national administration. There's nothing new in presidential resentment of press criticism. Franklin Roosevelt said a right-wing columnist should put on a dunce cap and sit in the corner. Nixon had an

enemies' list. But Bush has made attacks on the press a major, overt part of his political strategy. ... Karl Rove & Co. have been able to summon up choruses of right-wing denunciators like Sen. Jim Bunning and Rep. Peter King to call news stories "treason." How effective is such talk? At a minimum, it has caused editors to adopt a somewhat defensive posture, explaining and defending the role of the press as they did not use to do.

REPORTING in CENSORED COUNTRIES

Anne Nelson: As we move into a new and treacherous chapter of history, we have suffered from limiting our news coverage to countries willing to play by "our rules." In at least three crucial countries—North Korea, Cuba, and Saudi Arabia—that approach has been impossible. ...

News organizations have become more willing to draw on reporting from human rights groups, but there are other extraordinary sources to be tapped such as exiles, academics, religious groups, students, and the Internet. Every time untraditional sources are used, the story should include a reference to the lack of freedom that makes traditional reporting impossible. In dangerous times, getting the

news we need—in cogent packages presented with transparency—is more important than limiting news to the formats we're familiar with. The darkest countries are likely to present the greatest threat, and we shouldn't be too concerned as to whether we arm ourselves with a candle or a flashlight as long as it casts an accurate light.

WAR on TERROR

Ann Cooper: The vague, ongoing "war on terror" continues to take a sorry toll on press freedom. Leaders around the world have seized on terrorism as an excuse to muzzle reporting in the name of preserving national security. They have succeeded in creating a chilly new climate for journalism, where public officials and the public itself engage in rhetorical attacks and legal threats to intimidate or punish media that dare report on sensitive topics such as human rights abuses and the erosion of civil liberties. Journalists must understand this threat is a global one and unite as never before to protect independent reporting. ■

CPJ Online

To read the entire discussion, go to www.cpj.org/online_discussion.



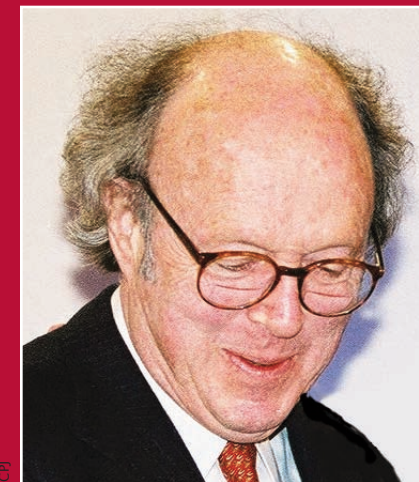
Peter Arnett



Josh Friedman



Jane Kramer



Anthony Lewis



Anne Nelson



Ann Cooper

A Trusted Colleague

Walter Cronkite recalls how the search for missing reporters in Vietnam led him to CPJ and on to Turkey.

Interview by Maya Taal

When CPJ first contacted you in 1981, it was a start-up organization with just a few people. So why would you agree to be honorary chairman?

I'd recently been active in an attempt to trace the fate of several correspondents and photographers who disappeared on assignment in Southeast Asia at the time of the Vietnam War. I thought my experience there might be helpful in organizing the Committee to Protect Journalists. To most of us who had had any experience in wartime it seemed clear that a strong organization to protect journalists was necessary. Our American reputation for the defense of press freedom makes us particularly good ambassadors in extending those freedoms to nations where they have been denied.

Tell us about your experience leading a committee of journalists seeking information about the missing in Vietnam.

While my name became attached to the efforts to find missing photographers and reporters in the Vietnam War, most notably in Cambodia, there were other journalists far more diligently and daringly involved in the search for information regarding our

missing comrades. Some of the most dedicated I think never, to this day, have given up on finding many of the missing. It was their dauntless efforts to find their comrades that inspired me to be as helpful as I could.

In 1995, you helped persuade Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller to drop charges against Reuters correspondent Aliza Marcus, who faced prison for reporting on counterinsurgency strikes against Kurdish rebels. Tell us about it.

The committee's long-running efforts to persuade several consecutive governments in Turkey to adopt basic democratic principles of free speech and free press resulted in wide recog-

nition of our devotion to these freedoms. It's an enduring effort and I'm proud to say that (former chairwoman and board member) Kati Marton and I were early representatives of the committee, dispatched to try to relieve the Turkish leadership's incredibly repressive treatment of the press.

Over 25 years, what milestone in the press freedom movement comes to mind?

Advances certainly include the United Nations' establishment of a World Press Freedom Day, celebrated annually on May 3 since 1994. It reminds the entire world of the necessity for a free press—and the dangers to those who fight for one. ■



Cronkite's commitment to journalists reported missing in Vietnam led him to CPJ. He's seen here reporting from Vietnam in 1968 and returning in 1985 for a special report from Hanoi.

Walter Cronkite, former CBS anchor, is CPJ's honorary co-chairman. Maya Taal is CPJ's board liaison.

Faces of Freedom

They come from the ranks of reporters and editors, cameramen and columnists, lawyers and advocates. In furthering freedom of the press in every corner of the world, they have often paid a dear price. Five lost their lives. Two spent years in captivity. Some worked underground to keep reporting the news. Others defied authorities and were ostracized as a result. Over the following pages, CPJ profiles these men and women whose lifetime contributions have had a lasting effect on the press freedom movement of the past 25 years.

Faces of Freedom



AP/Jay LaPete

Terry Anderson

United States

Terry Anderson was a veteran reporter for The Associated Press in Asia and Africa before a life-changing assignment to Lebanon as the news agency's chief Middle East correspondent. In March 1985, Anderson was captured by Hezbollah, the militant group supported by Iran during Lebanon's prolonged civil war, and held hostage for nearly seven years. Since his release in 1991, Anderson has been a vocal champion and persistent behind-the-scenes advocate for press freedom.

As honorary co-chairman of the Committee to Protect Journalists, Anderson has spoken out on press freedom issues, lobbied foreign officials, and worked on behalf of kidnapped journalists, sometimes traveling to sensitive regions such as Russia's far east, Turkey, and Yemen to help win their freedom.

"He gets on the phone with leaders and others and has a great impact because he is forceful and highly respected," says documentary filmmaker Marie-Hélène Carleton, whose fiancé, reporter Micah Garen, was abducted in Iraq in 2004 and eventually released.

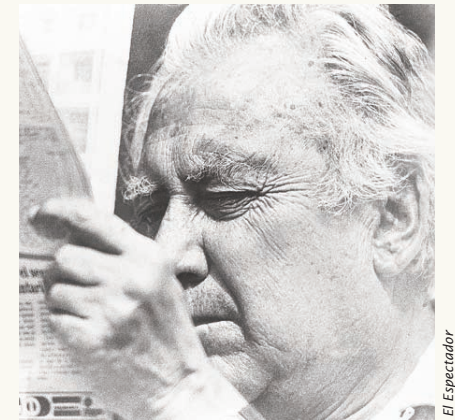
Anderson, 59, has lectured on the importance of a challenging and investigative press while teaching at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and as director of Ohio University's Institute for International Journalism, where he is still a fellow. He has received numerous awards, including Freedom Forum's first Free Spirit Award, honoring individuals who promote free speech.

In recent years, Anderson has drawn attention to restrictions on U.S. government information. "This is what a democracy is all about," Anderson says. "People cannot choose wisely if they do not have information."

—Heather Bourbeau



Faces of Freedom



El Espectador

Guillermo Cano Isaza

Colombia

Born in Bogotá in 1925, Guillermo Cano Isaza began his career at 17 reporting on bullfighting for *El Espectador*, the daily owned by his family. Cano became a columnist, launched *El Espectador's* Sunday magazine, and was named the paper's editor in 1952.

Cano's editorials earned *El Espectador* a reputation as a sharp critic of the dictatorship that ruled the country between 1953 and 1956. As Colombia's drug cartels developed into vicious criminal organizations three decades later, Cano condemned their actions and tried to hold their leaders responsible. Under his guidance, *El Espectador* campaigned persistently against the drug trade and backed the extradition of cartel leaders to the United States.

Cano, who lived for his job, paid with his life. As he was driving home from work on December 17, 1986, two gunmen on a motorcycle shot him eight times at close range. Medellín cartel kingpins were believed to have plotted the killing. Although pursued by the government for other crimes, the drug lords were never punished for Cano's murder.

The slaying marked the beginning of an unparalleled era of terror that took a deadly toll on the media. More than 50 Colombian journalists were subsequently killed for their work, CPJ research shows.

Cano perceived press freedom as a family legacy, says his brother, Alfonso. "For Guillermo, informing the public was much more important than his personal fears. ... He believed in freedom of the press even when the conditions to work freely as a journalist were extremely difficult. It was a family legacy to defend basic human rights. It was Guillermo's basis as a journalist."

Cano received national and international awards during his lifetime and after his death. He is remembered today by UNESCO's prestigious Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Award, which is given annually to honor the work of an individual, organization, or institution promoting press freedom worldwide.

—María Salazar



Faces of Freedom



Mediacoop

Carlos Cardoso

Mozambique

Carlos Cardoso, Mozambique's most famous investigative journalist, was assassinated in November 2000, after he spearheaded a series of exposés on official corruption. Since his death, Cardoso has remained a symbol of independent journalism throughout Africa. A CPJ report in 2001 noted that "everyone ... from Cardoso's competitors to senior government officials agrees that Cardoso was killed because he was the only journalist who had the contacts, skills, and inclination to confront the ruling elite with evidence of its own corruption."

Born to a family of Portuguese exiles in 1951, Cardoso rose quickly through the ranks of Mozambique's post-independence media, becoming chief news editor of the state-owned news agency AIM in 1980.

In 1990, Cardoso campaigned successfully for the inclusion of a clause guaranteeing press freedom in Mozambique's new constitution. Two years later, as Mozambique emerged from a bloody civil war, he helped start the news organization Mediacoop and became editor of its flagship publication, *Mediafax*. The faxed newspaper was heralded internationally as the vanguard of a free press in Africa. Cardoso later founded the newspaper *Metical*, of which he was editor until his death.

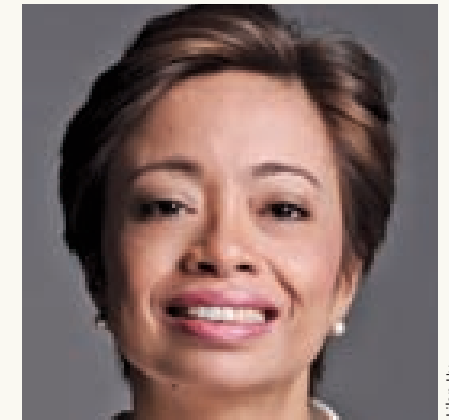
The lengthy prison sentences given in 2003 to six men found guilty of carrying out Cardoso's assassination are rare examples of justice in a journalist's murder. Yet the country's press corps has yet to recover fully from the killing, and in-depth coverage of corruption remains sparse.

Paul Fauvet, head of AIM's English service and a longtime colleague, says simply, "Cardoso was the best of us. He was an extraordinary colleague, comrade and friend, and I miss him deeply."

—Alexis Arieff



Faces of Freedom



Lilen Uy

Sheila Coronel

Philippines

The Web site of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism declares its mission simply: "We tell it like it is. No matter who. No matter what." As executive director for all but one of its 17 years, Sheila Coronel has been instrumental in making PCIJ a bastion of rock-solid reporting and professional integrity.

Adamantly independent, the nonprofit organization's 13 staffers deliver top-notch investigative reports, publishing more than 180 articles, producing five full-length documentaries, and writing more than a dozen books. The center provides professional training and mentoring, supports free expression initiatives, and documents press freedom abuses.

In a country where many journalists ally themselves with the players they are supposed to be covering, Coronel and PCIJ promote press freedom by shining a light on venal neighborhood political bosses, villainous military officials, corrupt cabinet members, and compromised colleagues in Philippine newsrooms. In 2001, PCIJ's reporting on endemic corruption brought down President Joseph Estrada's administration.

A teenager when Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, Coronel graduated from the University of the Philippines with a degree in political science and became a reporter for *Philippine Panorama* magazine. By 1986 Coronel was writing for *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* of London; her reputation as a hard-hitting political reporter was ensured by her work at the *Manila Times* and the *Manila Chronicle*.

The history of postwar Philippines reflects a slide into corruption and political ineptitude, she notes. "For all our effort, PCIJ hasn't been able to reverse our country's failures. But we have done our best to expose some of those who are at the root of our problems," Coronel says. "And in the end, that is what journalism is all about."

This fall, the 48-year-old Coronel became director of the Toni Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

—Bob Dietz



Faces of Freedom



Reuters/Nayef Haslamoun

Mazen Dana

Palestine

Mazen Dana stood out among Palestinian journalists covering Hebron. A giant of a man with a ruddy complexion, Dana towered above his colleagues filming the conflict in his West Bank hometown. A cameraman for Reuters for more than a decade, Dana braved bullets and violent attacks from Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers, and rocks from Palestinian demonstrators to bring the world images of Hebron, a cauldron of religious and political tension.

"To be a journalist and cameraman in a city of lost hope like Hebron requires great sacrifices," Dana said in 2001 as he received CPJ's International Press Freedom Award. "Gunfire, humiliation, beatings, prison, rocks, and the destruction of journalists' equipment are just some of the hardships."

Dana was shot in the leg three times, hit by rubber bullets, beaten by Israeli soldiers, and had his hand broken twice. None of this dampened his infectious good humor and determination to convey the truth through his reporting. He was sent on assignment throughout the Middle East and earned a reputation as one of the best Palestinian conflict cameramen of his generation.

In 2003 at age 41, Dana was dispatched to Iraq to record the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein. Seeing U.S. tanks outside Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison, Dana did what he always did. He hoisted his camera onto his shoulder and started filming. A machine gun on one of the tanks opened fire, killing him instantly.

"It's not easy to have a picture," he once said, "and a picture maybe will cost you your life."

—Joel Campagna



Faces of Freedom



Courtesy Michèle Montas

Jean Léopold Dominique

Haiti

Trained as an agronomist, Jean Léopold Dominique turned to radio in the early 1960s with a commercial program on Radio Haïti. After he purchased the station in 1971, Dominique changed the name to Radio Haïti-Inter to emphasize the common links between Haiti's provinces, and he introduced the country's first daily news broadcast in Creole. Haitian radio before Dominique was dominated by music and entertainment in French, even though most Haitians speak primarily Creole.

Dominique challenged the repressive rule of Jean-Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier with critical editorials, prompting government persecution, repeated police interrogations, and, ultimately, the station's destruction by the regime. Dominique went into exile in the United States, along with his wife and co-anchor, Michèle Montas. Returning after the ouster of Baby Doc in 1986, he was greeted by thousands of admiring Haitians at Port-au-Prince airport. Within a year, he rebuilt the station and was back on the air.

A supporter of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Dominique was forced into exile again in 1991 after a military coup toppled Haiti's first democratically elected leader. He returned after the United States helped restore Aristide three years later. But disappointed by the failure of Aristide's Lavalas Party to improve the poverty-stricken country, Dominique spoke out against government corruption. His reporting and commentary were unsparing in their criticism of Aristide and high-ranking administration officials.

On the morning of April 3, 2000, the 69-year-old Dominique was shot seven times by unidentified gunmen as he was about to enter the radio station. Members of the Lavalas Party are suspected in the assassination, which remains unsolved.

"He was able to expand Haiti's radio audience while giving them information in Creole," Montas says. "This is what made him the most innovative journalist in Haiti—and it is what made him a symbol."

—María Salazar



Faces of Freedom



Reuters/Morteza Nikoubazi

Akbar Ganji

Iran

Akbar Ganji, 47, a former Revolutionary Guard turned journalist and reformer, became one of Iran's most prominent political prisoners of the new millennium. He fell afoul of the religious and political establishment after a series of explosive articles that implicated leading officials in the 1998 killings of five dissidents and intellectuals. The Intelligence Ministry said "rogue agents" had carried out the killings, but Ganji maintained senior officials were behind them. He was sentenced to six years in prison in 2001 over the articles.

As a senior staffer for the now-defunct reformist daily *Sobh-eEmrooz*, Ganji had carved out a reputation as one of the country's most daring reporters, one who endured repeated persecution because of his investigative journalism. His work symbolized the emergence of the country's reformist news media, and his imprisonment reflected the government's ensuing crackdown.

While in jail in 2002, Ganji wrote a "Republican Manifesto," which laid out plans for a democratic Iran. He went on hunger strike several times to protest his imprisonment and lack of medical treatment, and he was allegedly tortured and mistreated by security officers. In 2005, during a particularly long fast, Ganji was taken to a hospital in north Tehran. The government denied that he was on hunger strike even then, saying that he had been hospitalized for treatment to a knee.

In a letter published by the London-based Arabic daily *Asharq al-Awsat* on July 12 that year, Ganji wrote, "I have become a symbol of justice in the face of tyranny, my emaciated body exposing the contradictions of a government where justice and tyranny have been reversed."

In March 2006, after worldwide calls for his release, Ganji was freed.

—Joel Campagna

Faces of Freedom



Courtesy González Delvalle

Alcibiades González Delvalle

Paraguay

Soon after Paraguayan columnist Alcibiades González Delvalle arrived in the United States in May 1980 for a one-month, State Department-sponsored tour, he learned that a warrant had been issued in Asunción for his arrest on an antistate charge.

The journalist's columns in the newspaper *ABC Color* and his work as head of the local press group Sindicato de Periodistas de Paraguay had made González a target of Alfredo Stroessner's dictatorship. The warrant was issued after González detailed the country's politicized criminal justice system in a series of articles.

Facing three years in prison, González decided to return home and confront the government—a decision that carried some risk at a time when a number of journalists had disappeared in Latin America. Before he returned, though, the columnist met with several prominent U.S. journalists to gain their attention.

González was arrested in Asunción and taken to the National Penitentiary, where he was held incommunicado. But reports of his arrest were published widely in international and domestic outlets. González was soon moved out of solitary confinement and, after two months of pressure, was freed and allowed to return to work.

Laurie Nadel, a CBS News writer, and Michael Massing, executive editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, were instrumental in publicizing the case. Their success led them to enlist other prominent journalists in forming what would become the Committee to Protect Journalists.

"The pressure from the international community was extremely important. If it wouldn't have been for this, I would have been subject of more repression," González says. "The attention was also important in getting the world to realize the nature of the Paraguayan dictatorship."

With the restoration of democracy in 1989, González was named cultural attaché at the Paraguayan embassy in Spain. At age 70, he now directs the Department of Culture for the city of Asunción, writes a weekly column for *ABC Color*, and edits the newspaper's cultural supplement.

—Carlos Lauría



Faces of Freedom



Courtesy Kemal Kurspahic

Kemal Kurspahic

Bosnia

In April 1992, as Serb nationalist forces launched what would become a 30-month-long siege of the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, Kemal Kurspahic gathered the staff of the independent daily *Oslobodjenje* to deliver a grim outlook. “I cannot promise that you will be alive when the siege is over,” press reports quoted the editor-in-chief as telling those who dared to stay. “Nor can I promise that you will get any awards or promotions. But I can promise you this: As long as Sarajevo exists, this newspaper will publish every day.”

Kurspahic kept his word. In the face of astonishing adversity, the paper did not skip an issue in three and a half years, becoming known as Sarajevo’s “daily miracle.” By summer 1992, tank fire and artillery shelling had reduced to rubble what were once *Oslobodjenje*’s modern, 10-story twin towers. The staff of 100 (down from 1,000 before the war) was forced to move operations to a bomb shelter beneath what remained of its headquarters.

Working in the most hotly contested section of Sarajevo, *Oslobodjenje*’s multi-ethnic staff represented the very ideal that nationalists wanted to destroy—Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats of Muslim, Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, and Jewish faiths, coexisting and cooperating. Kurspahic was considered a traitor by Muslim extremists who viewed his paper as pro-Serb and by Serbian nationalists who saw it as pro-Muslim. By the end of Sarajevo’s siege in 1995, five staffers had been killed and another 25 had been wounded, including Kurspahic who suffered a broken leg when he crashed his car while avoiding snipers.

Kurspahic says that he persevered in the belief that *Oslobodjenje*—the name means “Liberation”—gave hope to besieged Sarajevans and proved that something was still working in the ravaged city.

“I knew we had to keep going, first, because of the paper’s tradition since *Oslobodjenje* came into existence as the anti-Nazi paper in World War II,” he says now. “Then, because of the call of duty: How could we stop publishing when dozens of foreign journalists came to cover our story? And, most important, it was because of our readers. In prewar years, the paper gained their trust as the voice of those striving for democratic changes.”

Kurspahic, 59, later turned to international diplomacy and is now a regional representative for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

—Nina Ognianova



Faces of Freedom



Tong Yi

Liu Binyan

China

“Here is a Chinese person who said what had to be said and did what had to be done.” Before he died in exile in the United States in December 2005, Liu Binyan told his wife Zhu Hong that he wished to be remembered by this epitaph.

His plain words merely hint at his stature as the founding father of honest journalism during communist China’s formative years. A bearish man in appearance, Liu bristled at official attempts to fabricate a single, simple story out of the complexities of modern China. He tried to tell the truth about life as it was lived by common people every day, not as it was idealized by those in power.

Mao Zedong first condemned Liu as an “extreme rightist” in 1957. Even Liu’s wife considered the possibility that her husband—then a young journalist making his mark by writing about corruption in the newborn People’s Republic—had taken the wrong ideological path. “Of course, I tried to convince myself that maybe Mao was right,” Zhu says now. Yet she refused to divorce him, as many others faced with similarly excruciating circumstances had done. “At the bottom of my heart I knew he was a good person.” Liu spent the next two decades in obscurity. For four of those years he was banished to the countryside while Zhu, alone, worked and cared for their two children.

In the 1980s, Liu was allowed to resume his profession as a reporter for the *People’s Daily*. Writing about corruption, official bureaucracy, and the lives of ordinary people, he was regarded as keeper of China’s ethics. But Liu was again denounced by Chinese leaders, this time in a backlash against liberalism. He left the country in 1988 and was never allowed to return.

The day after Liu’s death at age 80, Lu Yuegang, then deputy editor of *Bing Dian*, a weekly that carried on Liu’s tradition of principled reporting, asked journalism students at Beijing’s People’s University if they had ever heard of the great reporter. A few mumbled tentatively. “If you do not know Liu Binyan,” he told them, “you cannot be a good journalist, and you cannot be a good scholar.” Lu understood the risks in following Liu’s forthright path; a few months later he himself was stripped of his editing job.

—Kristin Jones



Faces of Freedom



Donat M'baya Tshimanga and Tshivis Tshivuadi

Democratic Republic of Congo

Donat M'baya Tshimanga, right, and Tshivis Tshivuadi founded Journaliste en Danger in November 1998, making it one of Africa's leading press groups and demonstrating that advocacy can make a difference even in the most repressive and dangerous of places.

The two friends, both professional journalists before starting JED, have themselves been threatened with death on several occasions, notably after conducting an independent investigation into the unsolved November 2005 murder of veteran political affairs reporter Franck Ngycke Kangundu. The threats forced them briefly into hiding in 2005 and again in 2006, yet they returned to work each time to highlight attacks on the press.

M'baya, 43, and Tshivuadi, 44, have built a team of eight advocates in the capital, Kinshasa, and a network of correspondents across the vast country. They have spearheaded a campaign to remove criminal penalties for "press offenses," organized media training, and expanded JED's research to include other Central African countries.

The two established JED in response to attacks on the press under the late President Laurent Kabila, including persecution of Tshivuadi, who was forced into hiding for six months because of an article he wrote as deputy editor of the Kinshasa daily *Le Phare*. "Setting up JED was a kind of rebellion against the systematic arrests, beatings, and censorship of the press," JED President M'baya told CPJ in a 2004 interview.

Although the media climate has improved since Laurent Kabila was assassinated in 2001, journalists in the DRC still face frequent threats, harassment, imprisonment without due process, and violent attacks.

JED's reporting brings local and international attention to press freedom abuses in a way that often forces authorities to react. "So many journalists have been sent to jail," says Ben-Clet Kakonde Dembu, editorial director of the Kinshasa daily *Le Potentiel*, "but then JED sends its lawyers to defend them, and usually they are released. JED is an organization our country can be proud of."

—Julia Crawford

Faces of Freedom



Adam Michnik and Helena Luczywo

Poland

Adam Michnik and Helena Luczywo, formidable journalists and press freedom activists in their own right, together laid the foundation for Poland's modern, independent news media. In the run-up to Poland's first post-communist elections in 1989, Michnik and Luczywo founded *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Election Gazette), which has since become the country's leading newspaper. *Gazeta* started as a forum for the opposition but soon established its editorial independence. Under Michnik's 17-year editorship, with Luczywo as his deputy, *Gazeta* has blossomed from an eight-page pamphlet to an award-winning daily with a circulation of more than 440,000.

Michnik, a prominent writer and human rights advocate, had been imprisoned for a total of six years from 1965 to 1980 for his anticommunist views. Luczywo had edited the influential underground news magazines *Robotnik* (Worker) and *Tygodnik Mazowsze* (Mazovia Weekly). In April 1989, the two joined historic talks for a peaceful end to communist rule as advisers to opposition Solidarity leader Lech Walesa. When Walesa asked Michnik to edit a new opposition newspaper, Michnik recruited Luczywo as deputy, and together they assembled a staff that had already cut its journalistic teeth in the underground press.

Gazeta was an instant hit with a news-starved public, running stories on the pro-Boris Yeltsin demonstrations in Moscow's Red Square and the brutal crackdown on dissent in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Its economic survival, however, was by no means certain, and the newspaper endured lean early years, with little advertising and rising overhead. In the end, the quality and independence of the journalism saved *Gazeta* and sales rose. Michnik and Luczywo, both 60, are still at the helm.

"A free press is to a democratic society what oxygen is to a human," Michnik says. "Anyone who has lived under the cloud of dictatorship, who has breathed air permeated by lies, fear, and violence, understands that all too well."

—Nina Ognianova



Faces of Freedom



Tempo/Rully Kusuma

Goenawan Mohamad

Indonesia

Goenawan Mohamad's associates may have thought he was braver than he was wise when he launched *Tempo* magazine in 1971 with the aim of putting a check on Indonesian President Suharto's power. The authoritarian Suharto's harassment of journalists had coerced much of the Indonesian press into self-censorship.

Yet *Tempo* became the exception, maintaining its integrity and independence. "What we managed was not to succumb to the regime's way of thinking regarding press freedom—not to internalize its argument when it said not to speak," Mohamad says.

Tempo crossed the government's line in 1994, when it reported on a shadowy Indonesian arms deal. Suharto closed down the weekly, forcing Mohamad and many of his *Tempo* staffers underground.

Tempo might have been silenced, but Mohamad and his colleagues were not. Mohamad established the Institute for the Free Flow of Information (ISAI), which acted as a front organization to secretly produce an electronic version of *Tempo*, underground newspapers, and a series of critical books.

"The idea was to circumvent the regime's control of information," Mohamad says. Those involved in the movement "will likely remember that they were once ready to risk their lives for a free press," he adds. The student and pro-democracy group protests against *Tempo*'s closing were among the first acts of defiance that eventually grew into the street demonstrations that pushed Suharto from power in 1998.

Never forgotten, and in a sense never really gone, *Tempo* reappeared that year and reassumed its role as a potent symbol of Indonesian journalism. In 2000, Mohamad—equally well-known as a poet, intellectual, and music composer—handed over *Tempo*'s editorial responsibilities to Bambang Harymurti. Mohamad, 65, now runs an alternative cultural center in Jakarta.

—Shawn W. Crispin



Faces of Freedom



Reuters/Paul Cadenhead

Beatrice Mtetwa

Zimbabwe

In a country where the law is typically a weapon of the state, human rights attorney Beatrice Mtetwa has used it to defend the press. Thanks in large part to her work, no Zimbabwean journalist has been convicted under the notorious 2002 law known as AIPPA, which requires independent journalists and media to register with the government and sets strict constraints on reporting. In 2005, Mtetwa became the first lawyer to win CPJ's International Press Freedom Award.

Mtetwa has won acquittals in court for several prominent media figures, including four directors of Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ), the parent company of the banned *Daily News*, who were charged in 2003 with publishing a newspaper "illegally." In 2005, she won an acquittal for Kelvin Jakachira, a former journalist for the *Daily News* who was charged under AIPPA. And she staved off, if only for a time, the 2003 deportation of Andrew Meldrum, a correspondent for *The Guardian* of London and a target of government persecution.

Most recently, she has defended the directors of a private news production company, Voice of the People, charged with broadcasting without a license. The case, she says, shows that "the government of Zimbabwe is intensifying its persecution of press freedom advocates."

Mtetwa, 46, is also a founding member of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, a group that provides legal support to victims of human rights abuses throughout the country. Davison Maruziva, editor of the local newspaper *The Standard*, praises Mtetwa for "daring to challenge the state's might," and says she is one of "very few people who have taken up defense of the persecuted at great personal risk to themselves and their families."

—Alexis Arieff



Faces of Freedom



Reuters/Sergei Karpukhin

Anna Politkovskaya

Russia

Anna Politkovskaya's last assignment, an investigation into alleged torture by Chechen government-backed militia, covered ground as familiar as it was dangerous. As special correspondent for the independent newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, Politkovskaya had covered the Chechen war for seven years with an unwavering focus on human rights abuses. Her tough-minded reporting on topics that other media shunned had long angered Russian authorities. CPJ archives bulge with cases in which Politkovskaya was threatened, abused, jailed, and poisoned for her work.

Two days before her latest report was to be published, Politkovskaya, 48, was executed in her Moscow apartment building. Her murder on October 7 was the 13th contract-style slaying of a journalist in Russia since President Vladimir Putin took office in 2000.

In an e-mail interview with CPJ shortly before her murder, she expressed frustration at the deteriorating press situation in Chechnya—and what she saw as the international community's inability to effectively intervene. Politkovskaya was willing to take direct action herself at times, most notably when she tried to mediate the 2002 hostage standoff in a Moscow theater. But her work frequently made her the target. In February 2001, security agents detained her in Chechnya's Vedeno district, keeping her in a pit for three days without food or water. Seven months later, she was forced to flee to Vienna after receiving death threats from an officer accused of crimes against civilians.

In her interview with CPJ, Politkovskaya noted the government's long history of obstructing journalists covering the Chechen conflict, and she pointed to the deadly 2004 hostage crisis in the North Ossetian town of Beslan. "There is so much more to write about Beslan," she told CPJ, "but it gets more and more difficult when all the journalists are forced to leave." Politkovskaya tried to cover Beslan and was poisoned on the way. After drinking tea on a flight to the region, she became seriously ill and was hospitalized; the toxin was never identified because the medical staff was instructed to destroy her blood tests.

Russia's investigative record does not bode well. Since 2000, none of the contract-style journalist murders have been solved.

—Nina Ognianova and Anna Richter



Faces of Freedom



AP/Pavel Rahman

Tipu Sultan

Bangladesh

Local politicians in Bangladesh, often with the support of higher officials, use street thugs to intimidate the press. Tipu Sultan, 33, upset that equation with his investigative reporting. In the process, Sultan was attacked, his writing hand was badly injured, and he nearly lost his life. But his example galvanized the Bangladeshi press to fight against official corruption and indifference.

In late 2000, Sultan incurred the wrath of a member of parliament, Joynal Hazari, after exposing the politician's alleged involvement in an arson attack at a local school in southeastern Feni. A month later, on January 25, 2001, Sultan was abducted and beaten by 15 men who struck him with bats, sticks, and iron rods—aiming especially for his right hand. Left for dead on the side of a rural road, Sultan was discovered by a passerby and taken to a nearby hospital. He suffered broken bones to his hands, arms, and legs, and a gaping wound to his right arm, injuries that required a year of treatment.

Bangladeshi authorities are notorious for tolerating attacks and threats against journalists. The violence, prevalent in rural areas, has limited the ability of the press to cover key issues such as corruption, human rights, and the collusion between politicians and gangs.

In some ways, the Sultan case played out differently. After a 28-month investigation, Hazari and 12 others were charged with attempted murder. Sadly, it also points to the problems still facing the Bangladeshi press. Hazari fled to India, and his trial was suspended by the Supreme Court. The other defendants either fled or were released on bail. No one has been convicted, and Sultan's family still receives threats.

Sultan is left with hand and leg pain, but he is working again, covering terrorism and the activities of radical fundamentalists for the newspaper *Prothom Alo*. "After the attack I am living a new life, a rebirth. I survived because of the support of the people. When I think about the incident, I feel more dedication. I have nothing to lose in this 'bonus' life," he says.

—Sun Ho Jeong



Deadly News

Hundreds of journalists have been killed over 15 years, many on the orders of government officials. Few cases are ever solved.

By **Matthew Hansen**

The killers struck along a lonely road south of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, on a Sunday in December 1998, spraying automatic rifle fire into a jeep carrying Norbert Zongo, his brother, and two companions. The gunmen set the vehicle ablaze in a bid to obscure their crime, but they could not erase Zongo's reputation in the West African nation as the uncompromising editor of the weekly *L'Indépendant*.

Neither, to many people's eyes, could they conceal whose hands were stained with the killings—officials in President Blaise Compaoré's government whom Zongo had investigated relentlessly for alleged torture and murder.

Zongo, whose death has gone unpunished eight years later, is among the 580 journalists killed for their work since 1992, the year that CPJ began to keep detailed death records. A new analysis of journalist deaths worldwide over 15 years—the most extensive study of its kind ever undertaken—shows that most victims were like Zongo, local beat reporters and editors whose work did not conform to the stories spun by governments, armies, and political opposition groups. More than three times every month, CPJ found, a journalist has been killed for his or her work.

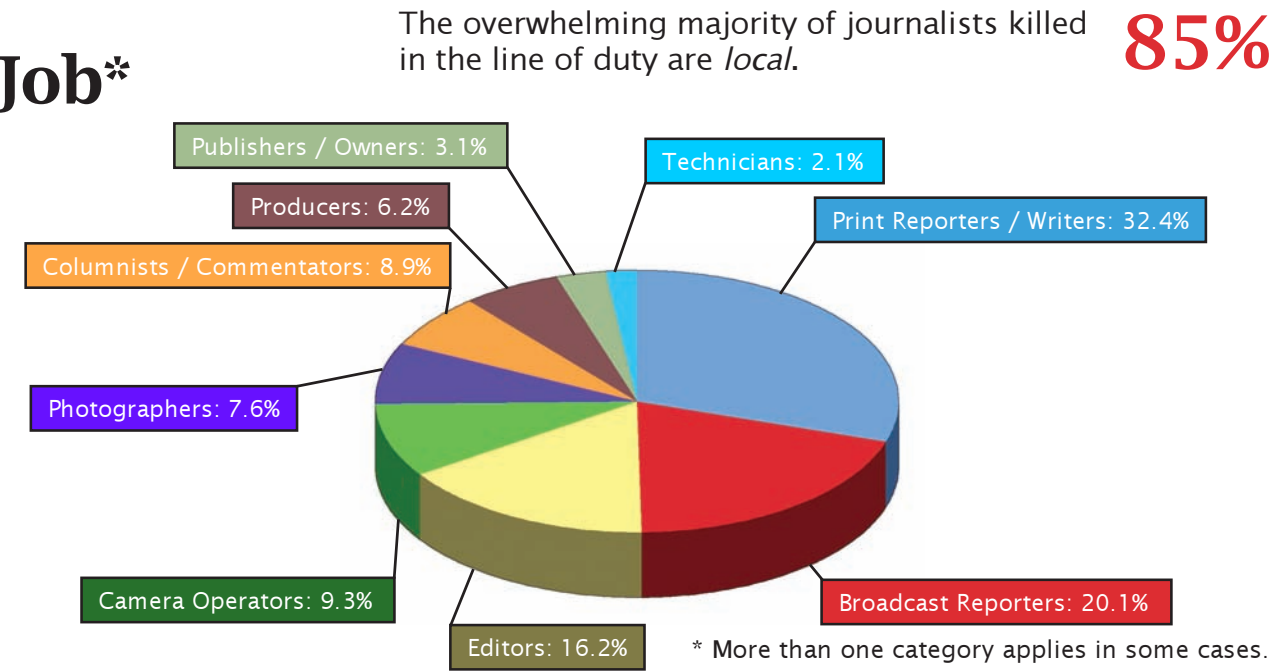
If popular imagination suggests journalists are typically killed by an errant bullet or a mortar bomb in battlefields, CPJ's data show that the majority—seven out of every 10—are targeted in retaliation for their reporting and hunted down to be murdered. Even in war zones, CPJ's analysis shows, murder is the leading cause of death.

Time and again, the very governments that journalists sought to check with their reporting are believed to be behind the slayings. Government and military officials are suspected of plotting, ordering, or carrying out more than a quarter of journalist murders over the past 15 years, CPJ's analysis

CPJ consultant **Matthew Hansen** compiled the organization's 15-year database of journalist deaths. This story includes reporting by **Tidiane Sy** in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, **Shawn W. Crispin** in Bangkok, **Heidi Hoogerbeets** and **Borja Bergareche** in New York, and **Frank Smyth** in Washington.

WHO

Job*



10.8% are freelancers.

6.6% are female.

Medium*

Print: 59%
Television: 26%
Radio: 17%
Internet: 1%

Graphics by *Justin Goldberg*

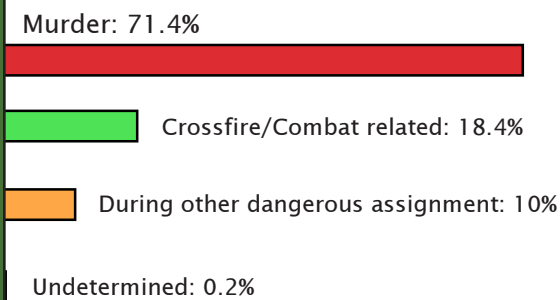
Statistics cover 1992 through August 15, 2006

Deadly News Online

For CPJ's **complete database** of all 580 journalists killed since 1992, go to: www.cpj.org/CPJ_kill_data.xls
For **narrative capsules** on all 580 cases, go to: www.cpj.org/killed/killed_archives/stats.html

WHAT

Type of Death



Weapons Used

Small arms: (handguns, rifles)	48.4%
Heavy arms: (artillery, air strikes)	16.2%
Explosives:	9.5%
Knives:	7.6%
Hands: (beating, strangling)	5.3%

Statistics cover 1992 through August 15, 2006

shows. Paramilitary groups, aligned with government security forces in nations such as Colombia and Rwanda, are suspected in another eight percent of killings.

But retribution can come from all political corners. In 24 percent of murder cases, political groups armed and allied against a government are suspected of killing journalists. Nowhere is that more evident than in Iraq, where insurgent groups are believed to have murdered more than 50 journalists.

And, like Zongo, the vast majority of journalists worldwide have been slain with virtual impunity. About 85 percent of journalists' killers in the last 15 years faced neither investigation nor prosecution for their crimes, CPJ found. Even when murders were more fully investigated and some convictions obtained, the masterminds were brought to justice in just seven percent of cases.

Print reporters faced greater retaliation than any other category of journalist, making up nearly a third of recorded deaths. But in parts of the world reliant on broadcast news radio commentators, as in the Philippines, and television journalists, as in India, bear a heavy burden. Regardless of medium, journalists were typically killed, not on assignment, but in their offices, on their commutes, or in their homes. Nine out of 10 murders, CPJ found, had the hallmarks of premeditation such as careful planning, groups of assailants, and gangland-style execution. Revenge displayed the full spectrum of human cruelty: the handgun and the rifle most commonly, but the knife, the car bomb, and the bludgeon as well.

The killers were brazen enough in a quarter of cases to have threatened the victims before murdering them. Nearly one in five victims were kidnapped as well, taken alive by militants, criminals, guerrillas, or government forces, and then killed. The kidnapping and murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl in early 2002 highlighted this phenomenon, which continues in Iraq today. In several cases, notably in Algeria and Turkey in the 1990s, journalists simply "disappeared" after being taken into government custody.

Much like the killing of a police officer or a prosecutor, the murder of a journalist threatens a society by under-

mining one of the primary means of holding people accountable. "A journalist is the voice of his or her community," said Pedro Díaz Romero, former human rights prosecutor for Colombia's attorney general's office. "To take the life of a journalist is to shut down a channel of information for the community. And after one journalist is killed, you may not need to kill another, as a threat or act

of physical intimidation may be enough to send the message to the community at large."

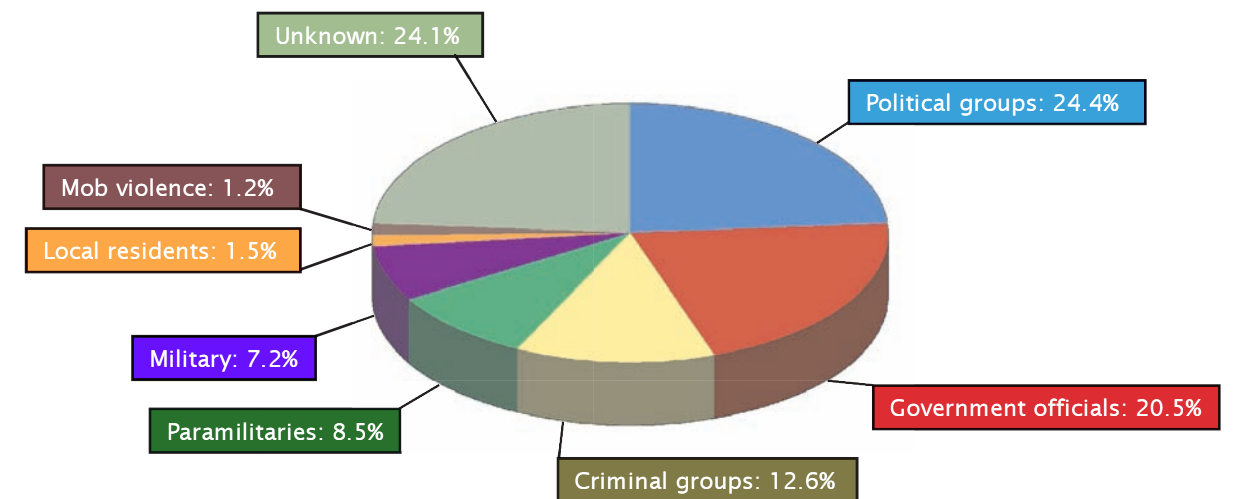
Speaking truth to power, a mantra of many who make their living in the press, carries with it the potential to anger and frustrate. More than one in five victims covered a political beat, and a similar number specialized in expos-

Spotlight: Murder

24.6% are threatened before being murdered.
19.1% are taken captive.

85% of murders are carried out with complete impunity.

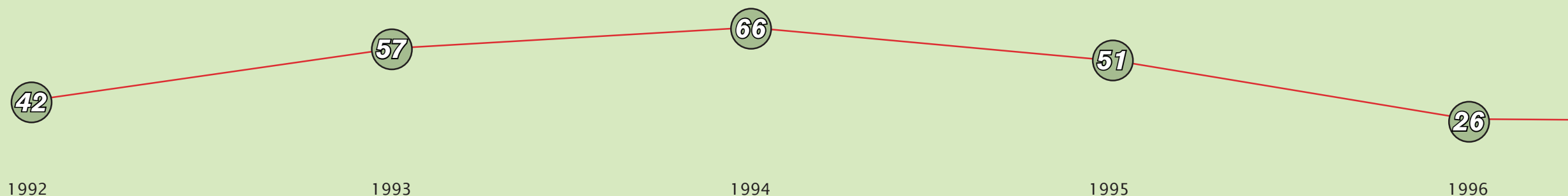
Suspected Perpetrators in Murder Cases

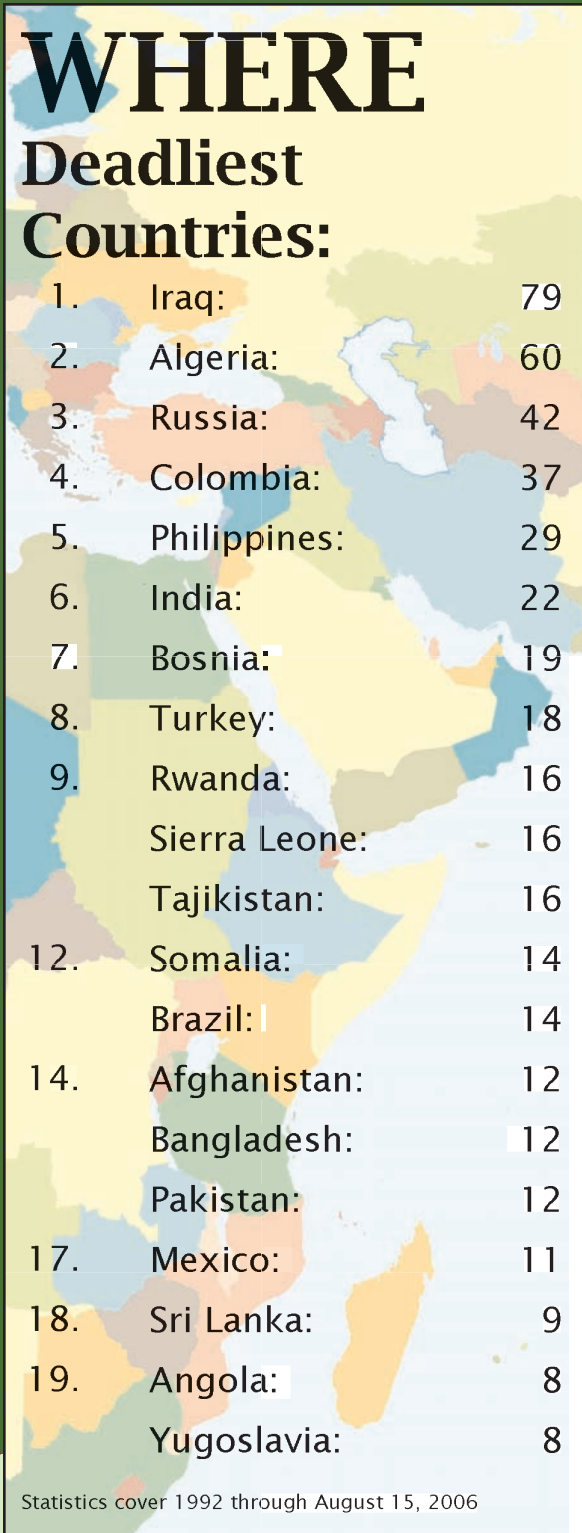


Paramilitary groups are organized, armed forces allied with, but not part of, the government. Political groups are armed elements opposed to, or at odds with, the government.

Statistics cover 1992 through August 15, 2006

WHEN





ing corruption. They were journalists like Dmitry Kholodov and Manik Saha.

Kholodov, an investigative reporter tracking allegations of corruption in the Russian military, was murdered in 1994 when a briefcase carrying what he thought to be classified documents exploded as it opened. Saha may have been many miles and years apart when he was killed in 2004 in Bangladesh, but he was also an investigative journalist killed by explosives, murdered when a bomb was thrown into his rickshaw as he made his way home. His offense was probing too deeply into extortion and Maoist groups, and a leftist political organization took credit for his death.

Like so many other cases, investigations into their deaths were delayed or halted outright. Nearly a decade after Kholodov's killing, a Russian military tribunal acquitted the military officials accused of the crime. "It's as if our son didn't even exist and that no one ever killed him," Kholodov's mother, Zoya, told CPJ.

In Bangladesh, a judge threw out the case against Saha's accused killers and ordered a "reinvestigation." "That's their strategy," said Mainul Islam Khan, a press advocate for the Bangladesh Center for Development Journalism and Communication. "To delay as long as possible so the drive for justice becomes weaker and people will finally forget about the verdict."

While Kholodov and Saha's deaths have been attributed to governments and political groups, their cases are remarkably similar to those of hundreds of other journalists murdered since 1992. Cases are closed without explanation, evidence is ignored, and witnesses are intimidated or attacked.

Colleagues of Orlando Sierra Hernández know this last fact well. Deputy editor of *La Patria* in Manizales, Colombia, Sierra was shot twice on a main street as he and his daughter walked back to the newsroom after lunch in January 2002. Sierra had long probed corruption within *la coalición*, a political cabal that governed his province with absolute authority. In Sierra's case, the hit man and two others were convicted and jailed, but testimony and evidence pointing to the intellectual authors have led nowhere. A judge and at least two prosecutors have beseeched investigators to follow up on witness statements that a local politician ordered the



Diario La Patria

Orlando Sierra Hernández

hit. Three of those witnesses have since been killed, but the politician has yet to be formally questioned by investigators.

"It would be a shame for Colombia's judiciary system if this becomes another case closed with only the material authors in prison when everything surrounding this murder—the systematic disappearance of clues and sources, key witnesses gone missing or murdered—points at powerful local political interests behind the crime," said Enrique Santos, editor of Bogotá's *El Tiempo*, which has investigated the case extensively.

The killings tell much about a country's commitment to the rule of law. In the few cases where justice has been served, police, advocates, and community leaders combined to condemn the killings and to prosecute the killers to the fullest. In the 1996 murder of Irish reporter Veronica Guerin, a near-folk

hero due to her groundbreaking investigations into Dublin's criminal underworld, community uproar led to the capture of three criminal leaders said to have ordered the murder.

The Guerin slaying was one of the "defining moments in the debate about law and order in Ireland," said Ian O'Donnell, a professor of criminology at the University of Dublin. "The calculated killing of a journalist indicated that criminal gangs felt they could operate with complete impunity." The Irish government went on to establish a specialized law



Veronica Guerin

26

1997

24

1998

36

1999

24

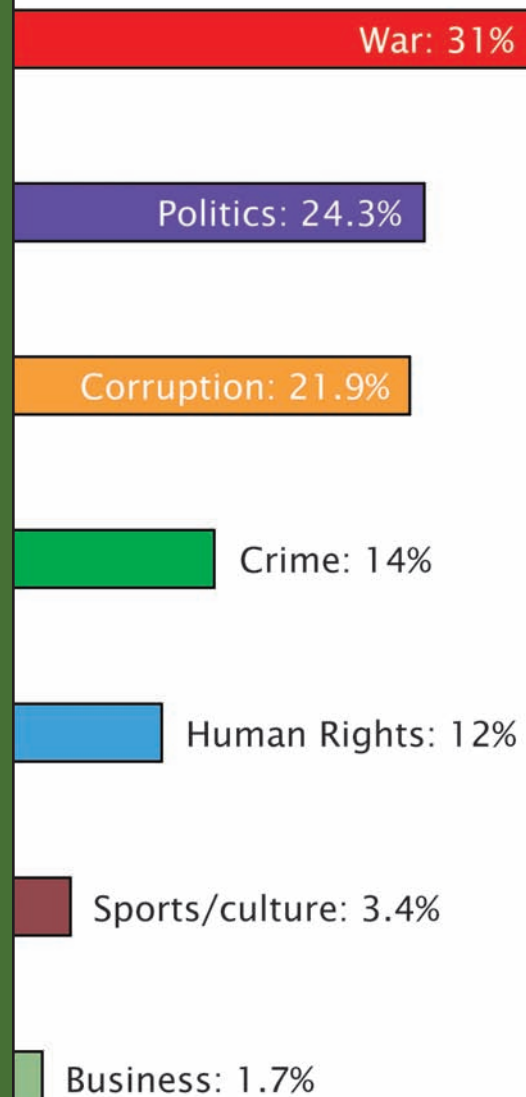
2000

37

2001

WHY Beats Covered by Victims*

* More than one category applies in some cases.



enforcement bureau dedicated to seizing the assets of criminals, which relies on tracking tax records—the same investigative method pursued by Guerin herself.

The mechanisms of war—mines, artillery, shrapnel, rifle fire—have claimed the lives of 107 journalists since 1992, making crossfire in combat the second-leading cause of journalist deaths. It is the combat arena into which most foreign correspondents plunge, and so, too, where they are most often killed. Of the 89 foreign correspondents killed since 1992, 49 died in combat-related crossfire.

Michael Kelly, the *Atlantic Monthly* editor and *Washington Post* columnist, was the first U.S. journalist killed in Iraq. He was embedded with U.S. troops when the Hummer in which he was riding on the outskirts of Baghdad swerved into a canal while attempting to avoid enemy fire in April 2003.

But Kelly's death, coming less than a month after the war began, became the exception in Iraq. More than half of journalist deaths there have been murders, and the majority of the victims have been Iraqis. Common are cases such as that of Nadia Nasrat, an anchor for the Coalition Authority-sponsored Diyala TV, who was killed in 2004 when insurgents targeted a bus transporting the station's employees. Journalists affiliated with U.S. or other Western interests were in the cross-hairs in the war's first two years. As sectarian violence spiraled, some CPJ sources speculate, journalists were also targeted because of their news organizations' real or perceived sectarian affiliations.

Journalists in conflict zones have often been targeted for their supposed affiliations, CPJ's analysis found. In Algeria's Islamist struggle in the early 1990s and Turkey's flare-up of fundamentalism in 1992, political groups declared as enemies media seen as representing secular values. During Rwanda's genocide, journalists were targeted regardless of ethnicity for being seen as supportive of peace and political reform. Murder goes virtually unpunished in conflict-ridden countries, where police and judicial systems are typically dysfunctional.

The parameters are different in combat-related deaths, those in which journalists are killed by shelling, sniper, air attacks, or other acts of war. While journalists are not nec-



James Miller

essarily targeted in these cases, CPJ has found that their deaths often could have been avoided had an army's own rules of engagement been properly followed. Responsibility is murky in many of these cases, largely because the killings are rarely subjected to a thorough or impartial investigation.

In Iraq, for example, CPJ's analysis found no evidence that U.S. forces deliberately targeted any of the 14 journalists killed by its soldiers—but it also found that the U.S. military failed to fully investigate the killings.

That pattern was replicated worldwide. CPJ found 22 cases in which family or colleagues sought investigations into combat-related journalist deaths. In 14 of those cases, either no action was taken or results were not made public. Investigations exonerated soldiers in the eight other cases.

Take the case of James Miller, a British documentary filmmaker shot in the neck by an Israel Defense Forces officer in the Gaza Strip in May 2003. Crew members, who had just wrapped up a day of filming, said they were wearing jackets and helmets marked "TV" and were holding a white flag illuminated by a flashlight. Israeli officials declined to bring criminal charges or take disciplinary action even as they acknowledged that the officer violated military rules

of engagement and gave conflicting accounts of his actions.

"James' family is deeply disappointed and frustrated that, in over three years since his killing, there has never been a proper, open, and transparent investigation by the Israelis into his death," said Liz Sich, a Miller family friend and spokesperson.

Journalist deaths typically spike in times of war, from about 26 in years without major conflict to roughly 46 in years of significant warfare. Several of the deadliest countries for journalists—Iraq, Algeria, Colombia, and Bosnia, for example—reflect the wars that have endangered all citizens.

But CPJ also found that the worst countries include Russia and the Philippines, where war was not the leading factor. In those nations, systemic investigative shortcomings and institutional efforts to gloss over the problem contributed to the toll by creating a climate of impunity.

In the Philippines, where more than 80 percent of the public gets its news from radio, broadcast commentators constitute the majority of victims and local government officials the bulk of suspects. But the rare cases that go to court are sidetracked because witnesses are killed, threatened, or coerced, while corrupt local police and justice officials do little to intervene.

Marlene Garcia-Esperat, a well-regarded Philippine broadcaster and columnist whose anti-graft message earned the ire of local officials, was shot in her Tacurong home in front of her horrified family on Easter weekend in 2005. Garcia-Esperat's case quickly went to court, only to have the judge dismiss indictments against two high-profile officials. Witnesses say they are being threatened, and the case is stalled.

In Russia, the spread of capitalism and private investment fueled business corruption, along with a breed of journalist eager to probe the connections between money, crime, and politics. The ensuing retaliation extended to even high-ranking news executives.

Yet Russian authorities turn a blind eye to work-related motives in journalist deaths. In at least four cases since 2000, CPJ found, Russian authorities classified journalist



slayings as “street crimes” despite compelling work-related evidence. Eduard Markevich, a newspaper publisher in the Ural Mountains region, had been threatened and jailed for his paper’s coverage—but when he was shot outside his home in October 2002, friends say, there was little indication that investigators considered professional motives.

“Prosecutors deliberately ignored journalism as a motive because Eduard Markevich actively criticized local officials,” Maria Istomina, a family friend, told CPJ. Markevich’s wife and co-publisher shut down the paper just months after the killing—when a dumbbell was thrown through her window and someone tried to set her house on fire. The murder case was closed without arrests.

If victims and circumstances vary between Russia and the Philippines, authorities in the two nations share one trait: They’re quick to consider a case “solved.”

In both nations, cases are considered solved if a suspect has been identified and some legal action taken—even in the absence of a conviction. “My long-term experience of communicating with representatives of international organizations, including those defending the rights of journalists, shows that they do not always comprehend many norms of the Russian code of criminal procedure,” Natalya Vishnyakova, a spokeswoman for Russia’s prosecutor-general, told CPJ in a 2005 letter.

“To us,” said Col. Frederick Oconer of the Philippine National Police, “we say a case is solved when we have identified a suspect and filed a case in court.” The national force said it considered about half of Philippine journalist murders to be solved, although CPJ’s analysis found the country’s impunity rate well over 90 percent. CPJ considers a case solved and justice served only when those who ordered the

killing are arrested and prosecuted. If the killers are convicted and progress is made toward identifying the masterminds, CPJ considers justice to be partially served.

Over all, CPJ’s database includes only those cases in which it is reasonably certain that a death was directly related to a journalist’s work. CPJ continues to track—but does not include in this database—another 216 journalist deaths in which the circumstances are not clear. Neither does CPJ include in its database journalists who are killed in accidents—such as car or plane crashes—unless the crash was caused by hostile action. Other press organizations using different criteria cite higher numbers of deaths than CPJ.

Dangerous assignments, such as coverage of riots in domestic situations, account for 10 percent of journalist deaths over all and constitute the third primary cause of death. Such cases are most common in Africa and Latin America, where pro-

testers frequently clash with police and military forces in the streets, and journalists are caught in the center.

Photographers, with a need to position themselves close to the action, are at particular risk in these situations. One example is Ken Oosterbroek, head photographer of Johannesburg’s *The Star*, caught in the crossfire during a struggle between protesters and police on the eve of South Africa’s historic elections of 1994. Due to his willingness to pursue the story, Oosterbroek did not live to see Mandela elected 11 days later.

Photographing a protest and reporting on a war bring with them inherent dangers. Yet justice and accountability can be brought to individual cases and those actions, in turn, can help address the overall death rate.

Mobilizing domestic and international public opinion has

The Last Story: Hayatullah Khan

By Bob Dietz

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan

On his last assignment in the lawless tribal region of North Waziristan, Hayatullah Khan filed photos and a story indicating a U.S.-made Hellfire missile had struck a home in the town of Miran Shah, killing senior al-Qaeda figure Hamza Rabia. The story, which appeared in the widely read Urdu-language daily *Ausaf*, and the pictures, distributed by the European Pressphoto Agency, contradicted the Pakistani government’s official explanation that Rabia had died in a blast caused by explosives located in the house.

The next day, December 5, 2005, five gunmen ran Khan’s car off the road, abducting the journalist as his younger brother Haseenullah watched helplessly. Six months passed amid a swirl of rumors about Khan’s fate before the phone rang at his family’s home at 4:40 p.m. on June 16. A Pakistani intelligence officer identifying himself as Major Kamal said Khan’s body had been dumped in Miran Shah’s marketplace. With that, the officer said, his responsibility to the family had ended.

Khan, 32, was a well-connected journalist, fixer, and entrepreneur who had also started a school and a small inn. He was no stranger to trouble in Pakistan’s troubled

Bob Dietz, CPJ’s Asia program coordinator, led a mission to Pakistan in July.

Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the border region adjoining southeastern Afghanistan where the Taliban is fighting NATO forces. In 2002, U.S. forces in Afghanistan’s Paktika province detained Khan for four days. Over the years, he was threatened by virtually every regional faction: Pakistan’s powerful Inter-Services Intelligence division (ISI), the military, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda.

Freelance writer Eliza Griswold worked with Khan several times and said he invariably knew what was afoot “in one of the most clandestine corners of the world.” Some journalists could be put off by Khan’s comparatively high fixer rates, but Griswold said that “he followed the story, no matter the personal cost.”

In November 2005, a few weeks before disappearing, Khan met a military intelligence major in Miran Shah and was warned “to leave his profession or leave Waziristan or accept the government’s political policies,” another brother, Ihsanullah, recalled. “On the night of November 27,” he told CPJ, “Hayatullah passed his will to his tribe and explicitly stated, ‘If I am kidnapped or get killed, the government agencies will be responsible.’”

Whatever role, if any, the government played in Khan’s killing, it appeared to engage in a cruel misinformation campaign during his six-month disappearance. As Khan’s family careened between government sources in search of information, the official account morphed from one month to the next: Khan was in government custody, soon to be

released; Khan had been abducted by “miscreants;” he had been taken by Waziristan mujahedeen; he had been flown to the military base at Rawalpindi and then detained in Kohat air base. Ihsanullah Khan said Zaheer ul Islam, a regional government agent, summoned family members on May 15 to say that the journalist was at the U.S.-run Bagram air base in Afghanistan. The situation, ul Islam said, was out of his hands.

Ihsanullah Khan angrily pressed ul Islam for a better response. The political agent then “promised Hayat’s children that their father will come back to them alive and safe,” Khan told CPJ. “We happily returned from Miran Shah to our house in Mirali. I told the good news to my mother, sister-in-law, and sisters who performed some rituals and told our relatives that Hayat would be back.”

Interviewed by CPJ, ul Islam acknowledged meeting the Khan family but denied making such a statement.

When his body turned up, Hayatullah Khan was thin, dirty, and in the same clothes he wore when he was abducted. Ihsanullah Khan said his family, too frightened to go to the marketplace to retrieve the body, saw it only later when it was prepared for burial. The family was told by hospital workers that Khan had suffered five or six bullet wounds and that one hand had been manacled in handcuffs typically used by the ISI. Mahmud Ali Durrani, Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States, dismissed the reported presence of the handcuffs as circumstantial and said the cuffs could have been planted to incriminate the government. No autopsy was performed.

An investigation led by High Court Justice Mohammed Reza Khan has been completed, but the results have not been made public. Hayatullah Khan’s family said they were



The murder of Hayatullah Khan, shown here on assignment in 2005, is wrapped in questions.

not interviewed by the judge or other investigators. North-west Frontier Gov. Ali Mohammad Jan Orakzai told CPJ that North Waziristan was not secure enough to risk exposing a judicial figure to kidnapping or death. Of the eight journalists murdered in Pakistan since 2002, only the case of the American Daniel Pearl has been investigated to any result or degree of competence.

Pakistani officials have pledged to review all of the cases, but journalists are skeptical. And one, Sailab Mehsud, president of the Tribal Union of Journalists, was blunt in assessing the government’s role in the slaying: “We know that the government had a hand in this. A message has been sent that we should stop doing our work. For us, the post-Hayat period will only be more dangerous.” ■



Georgy Gongadze



José Luis Cabezas

been crucial in cases where genuine progress has been made, CPJ found. Ukrainian Myroslava Gongadze led an international campaign to draw attention to the politically inspired 2000 killing of her husband, Georgy Gongadze, editor of the news Web site *Ukrainska Pravda*. Her efforts cast a spotlight on a decade of corrupt, authoritarian rule, eventually spawning the Orange Revolution that ousted President Leonid Kuchma. Under new President Viktor Yushchenko, three former police officials have been charged with the murder.

In other cases, CPJ found, journalists continued to probe the underlying news that drew deadly retaliation—effectively undermining the logic of killing a journalist to quash a story. In Argentina, José Luis Cabezas was kidnapped and killed in 1997 after photographing the reclusive business tycoon and reputed mafia kingpin Alfredo Yabrán. If the intention was to keep Yabrán out of the newspaper, the effect was the

opposite: Argentine reporters started digging deeper, exposing the sweetheart government deals that had enriched Yabrán. A police chief and seven others were eventually convicted in the case. Yabrán, the investigative dragnet drawing tighter, committed suicide.

Maintaining a professional distance from politicians and newsmakers can create a more secure climate for journalists. In places such as Brazil and the Philippines, local journalists told CPJ that their own colleagues contribute to the risk by abandoning professional standards. For example, Philippine journalists cite “block-time” broadcasting, in which commentators lease airtime and solicit their own sponsors, as leading to questionable practices such as “AC/DC journalism,” or “Attack, collect. Defend, collect.” Some block-timers, journalists said, attack and defend reputations based on which politician is paying them at a given time.

War will always be dangerous, but educating military forces about the rights of journalists in conflict zones can make it safer. In 2005, CPJ and Human Rights Watch urged U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to take basic steps to improve safety at military checkpoints in Iraq. The recommendations, many echoed by rank-and-file military officials, called for the use of non-lethal measures such as spike strips to disable vehicles; the use of international symbols to warn drivers; and the use of sirens and warning lights. Military forces must be willing to investigate journalist killings, even when they are unintentional.

It's vital, too, that lessons be learned. Postwar investigations and “truth commissions” need to include examinations of journalist deaths. Though there have been painfully few of these inquiries, those that have been undertaken have yielded strong results. The United Nations Commission on the Truth

Justice on Trial: Dmitry Kholodov

By Heidi Hoogerbeets

Yuri and Zoya Kholodov have devoted more than a decade to pursuing justice for their son Dmitry, a reporter for the Moscow newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, who was murdered in October 1994 after exposing high-level corruption in the Russian military. Kholodov, 27, was due to testify before parliament about his reports on illegal arms trafficking.

Six defendants, four of them intelligence officers, were acquitted in two separate military trials, in 2002 and 2004, of booby-trapping a briefcase given to the reporter. “The trials took a heavy toll on us,” Yuri Kholodov said. “The most excruciating and endless of pains you feel is the scream of your soul when someone murders your son or daughter, your most precious treasure in the world.”

Now in their late 60s, Yuri and Zoya Kholodov have worked to keep their son's death from vanishing from the public eye. By their account, they have pored over dozens of volumes of court transcripts to find flaws and oversights in the official investigation. Yuri Kholodov, a physicist, carried out his own tests of explosives to determine whether the bomb was intended to kill and whether it could have come from the airborne unit headed by one of the defendants. He hired forensics experts and sought, without success, to introduce the findings as evidence. The Kholodovs have given numerous interviews, advised the families of

Heidi Hoogerbeets is a CPJ staff member based in New York.



Zoya and Yuri Kholodov hear verdicts of not guilty in the 2002 trial of six men accused of killing their son.

other journalists killed in Russia, and written a long series of letters to military, judicial, and human rights officials.

With the case closed in Russia and domestic appeals exhausted, the Kholodovs have turned to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. The court has authority to conduct an inquiry into the death, review the actions of the domestic court, and award compensation for flaws in the prosecution.

“In our city the people tell us never to give up,” said Yuri Kholodov, whose family lives in Klimovsk, south of Moscow.

Dmitry Kholodov was killed in his own newsroom after retrieving from a source a briefcase that purportedly contained secret documents. A colleague, Katya Deyeva, was injured.

Russian military prosecutors argued that the six defendants killed Kholodov on orders from Pavel Grachyov, then defense minister. Grachyov, who had been named in many Kholodov articles, was never charged in the case. In court, Grachyov testified that he reacted to some of Kholodov's articles by using expressions such as “break his legs” or “shut his mouth” but insisted his words were not a prescription for murder.

Two separate panels of judges sitting in the Moscow Military District Court found the suspects not guilty, saying the prosecution did not convincingly explain the motive or connect the defendants to the killing. The courts discounted the reported confessions of three of the defendants, saying they were either coerced or were unsupported by other evidence. A 2005 appeal was rebuffed.

Yuri and Zoya Kholodov question the impartiality of any military tribunal hearing a case in which serious allegations are made against high-ranking military officials. “We clearly understand that the courts were executing the orders of certain influential figures in entering the verdicts of not guilty,” Zoya Kholodov said. Russian military justice officials did not respond to CPJ's requests for comment.

As evidence, the couple said the courts disregarded forensic evidence, adjourned the trial for long periods without explanation, and repeatedly failed to provide them with court records within the three days required by law. Witness

testimony, they noted, changed from one trial to the next.

The European Court of Human Rights has agreed to hear the case, although it's unclear how soon. In their complaint, the Kholodovs said the Russian legal system failed to properly and fairly investigate their son's murder. In 2005, the European Court issued an important ruling in the slaying of another journalist, Ukrainian Internet editor Georgy Gongadze. The court ruled that Ukrainian authorities failed in their duty to protect Gongadze's life, failed to thoroughly investigate his death by limiting their probe, and treated his widow in a degrading manner by not giving her access to materials in the case.

Maksim Rachkovsky, a lawyer for the Kholodovs, said the Russian case spotlights the justice system's ongoing failure to solve the murders of journalists. “The authorities should feel particular responsibility for the lives of journalists because a democratic society cannot exist without a free press,” Rachkovsky said. “When journalists try to fight corruption with their investigative articles, they are forced into silence.”

As one of the first journalist killings in post-Soviet Russia, the Kholodov case is a milestone that resonates today, said Aleksei Simonov, president of the Moscow-based Glasnost Defense Foundation. CPJ has documented the deaths of 42 journalists in Russia over the past 15 years, many of them contract-style slayings and the vast majority unsolved. In case after case, families said they were abandoned by the justice system designed to protect them.

Zoya Kholodov said the appeal to the Strasbourg court is intended to be a complaint about the Russian system. “No value can be placed on a person's life,” she said. “It's not about compensation—the most important thing is that we've lost faith in justice.” ■

in El Salvador, which investigated human rights violations against Salvadoran citizens during the nation's 12-year civil war, also probed instances of journalists caught in crossfire. In the case of four Dutch journalists killed in a 1982 ambush, the commission implicated an Army commander who planned the raid and the Supreme Court judge who helped cover it up.

Norbert Zongo did not set out to become a martyr, but his slaying galvanized a nation fed up with political killings and official brutality. An unprecedented wave of demonstrations stretching over 18 months prompted the government

to pursue democratic reforms and spurred President Compaoré to issue an extraordinary public apology in 2001 in which he expressed “deep regret for torture, crimes, injustices, bullying, and other wrongs” committed by the state.

Yet justice is elusive. Charges were dropped in July against the only person ever indicted in Zongo's murder, a former officer in the presidential guard. Burkinabé officials have grown nearly silent about what, if anything, will ever happen in the case. Wait, they say. These things take time, they explain.

That's what the parents of Dmitry Kholodov in Russia

A Flickering Flame: Norbert Zongo

By Tidiane Sy

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso

A lamp burns in a corner of the media center named for murdered journalist Norbert Zongo. It is a reminder that after eight years no one has been brought to justice for the killing of one of the most prominent investigative journalists in the West African country of Burkina Faso.

The case, which spurred journalists, politicians, and human rights activists to push for a high-level investigation, reaches into the presidential palace. But the momentum that followed the findings of an independent Commission of Inquiry in May 1999 is ebbing. The commission identified six “strong suspects” in the murder, but no one has been prosecuted.

“The lamp was placed here the day the independent commission submitted its report,” said Salif Kouala of the Association of Burkina Faso Journalists. “It will remain here and will remain lit until the truth is found. I can remember very well one Western diplomat asking me that day ... ‘Do you guys have enough oil to keep it burning until then?’”

Kouala understands the question only too well. Wenceslas Ilboudo, the examining magistrate in charge of the Zongo investigation since 1999, dropped charges in July against the only suspect he ever indicted. Ilboudo, who has refused to talk to the media, cited a lack of evidence in dismissing charges against Warrant Officer Marcel Kafando, a member of the Presidential Guard Regiment.

With that, Ilboudo's appointment—and the active investigation—came to a conclusion. It was a severe blow for

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family and colleagues who have sought justice since Zongo's charred and bullet-riddled body, and those of three others, were found in a remote area 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of Ouagadougou on December 13, 1998.

Zongo, editor of the weekly newspaper *L'Indépendant*, was riding with his brother and two companions when gunmen fired on their jeep. Before his death, Zongo had been investigating allegations that François Compaoré, brother and special adviser to President Blaise Compaoré, took part in the January 1998 killing of his driver, David Ouedraogo. The chauffeur was suspected of stealing 20 million CFA francs (then US\$27,000) from François Compaoré.

Outrage at Zongo's murder sparked a mass movement led by journalists and activists who were sickened by the Compaoré government's alleged corruption and violent suppression of political dissent. In early 1999, President Compaoré promised the commission a free hand in its investigation, and within months the panel concluded that Zongo had been killed for investigating Ouedraogo's murder. Kafando and five other members of the Presidential Guard were named as “serious suspects” in the Zongo murder.

In 2000, Kafando and two other guardsmen were found guilty of killing the chauffeur and sentenced to 10 to 20 years in jail. Six months later, authorities acknowledged a link between the murders of the driver and Zongo, but the connection yielded little result.

Kafando's co-defendant, Edmond Koama, was found dead in his prison cell in January 2001 “after a long disease,” according to a government statement. A few days later, the state prosecutor questioned François Compaoré about the Zongo case but did not take any action. The next



Norbert Zongo

month, judge Ilboudo indicted Kafando in Zongo's murder. Yet despite the pending indictment—and his conviction in the chauffeur's murder—the former guardsman was released from prison for unspecified health reasons in August 2001 and has lived in his home here since. Repeated attempts by CPJ to contact Kafando were unsuccessful.

The dismissal of charges against Kafando has outraged Zongo's supporters, who say the government never intended the judicial investigation to find the killers.

“It was no accident that the government chose to appoint a very young judge,” said Chérif Sy, editor of the weekly *Bendré* and president of the Society of Private Newspaper Proprietors. “This case is not legal but political,” Sy, who was also a member of the Commission of Inquiry, told CPJ. “The case could have been concluded in three months if the judge was not a simple political appointee following orders.”

Liermé Somé, editor of *L'Indépendant*, said he has no illusions about what progress can be made while President Compaoré remains in office. The Zongo case “has become a highly political issue and everyone knows that as long as Blaise is in power, it will be difficult to have a fair trial,” Somé told CPJ just before the charges were dropped against Kafando.

Both the minister of justice, Boureima Badini, and the state prosecutor's office declined CPJ's requests for interviews. Numerous attempts by CPJ to contact Ilboudo were unsuccessful.

A presidential aide, however, dismissed allegations that Blaise Compaoré and his family had anything to do with Zongo's murder. “Neither the presidency nor anyone in the presidential family had an interest in killing a prominent journalist when the president himself had just won an election victory,” the official, Victor Sanou, told CPJ. As far as the investigation into Zongo's murder is concerned, Sanou

were told, and they are still waiting. In Colombia, Orlando Sierra's colleagues are being told to wait, too. When the time is right, authorities say, local politicians will be questioned about their role in the brazen daylight murder.

In his work, Norbert Zongo set an example. He saw wrongdoing in a government that should have been doing right by its citizens. He looked where others averted their gaze, and for that, he was gunned down, set ablaze, his body and those of his companions left as debris on a dusty, near-forgotten landscape. Norbert Zongo's legacy is great, but it is incomplete. ■



Chérif Sy, a leading Burkinabé editor, says the government never wanted to solve the Zongo murder.

said that “more time is necessary” and pointed to a justice ministry statement that the case could be reopened if the evidence warrants.

Some of Zongo's colleagues and friends believe the government is stalling for time, and they fear the strategy is succeeding. The broad association of political and human rights activists known by its French name, *Le Collectif*, that sprung up immediately after Zongo's killing was beginning to disintegrate amid internal squabbling over strategy even before the July 18 dismissal of charges against Kafando. “The collectif is not the force it used to be,” Sy said.

“Obviously we are all shocked, considering all our efforts in this case since 1998,” said Somé, who vowed to fight on. “We can't accept that people come to put us off with such a decision eight years later.”

The lawyer for the Zongo campaign, Benewende Sankara, has appealed Ilboudo's decision, which he said proves “that the judiciary is not independent in this country.” The case is too high profile to simply disappear, he said. “No one will dare to bury this case. ... The people will never accept it.” ■



Four on War

Reporters assess the toll and the lessons of war.

French journalist Patrick Chauvel runs from an explosion outside a Baghdad church in August 2004.

War reporting is inherently dangerous, but no conflict in CPJ's 25-year history has proved deadlier for journalists than Iraq. Veteran Iraq correspondent **Jane Arraf** gives a personal account of how journalists, once welcomed on the streets of Baghdad, are now kidnapped and murdered by insurgents. Associated Press correspondent **Richard Pyle**, a former Saigon bureau chief, analyzes the shift in war reporting since the days of unfettered access in Vietnam to the loss of "noncombatant" status in recent conflicts. BBC Middle East correspondent **Jim Muir** describes the difficulties in covering fighting between Israel and Hezbollah this summer, when Israeli airpower prevented journalists from venturing onto the roads of South Lebanon. And *Newsday's* **Roy Gutman**, who put a spotlight on war crimes in Bosnia, argues that journalists must take their hard-gained war experiences and incorporate them into structured training for aspiring war correspondents. More than ever, he says, reporters need to be expert in the humanitarian and political aspects of war. Here, on the following pages, are views of war from these four vantage points. ■

Reuters/Cerwan Aziz

When the Baghdad office of the International Committee of the Red Cross was destroyed in October 2003, it signaled that tragedy could touch anyone.



AP/Arja Niedringhaus

Shoot the Messenger

Journalists in Iraq turn from war's witnesses to targets.

By Jane Arraf

It's a rare phone call or e-mail from Iraq these days that brings good news. But this from an Iraqi colleague is particularly chilling. She's been told she is on an assassination list. "Imagine the situation," she tells me. "Sitting and waiting for the bullet. Any bullet."

She still ventures out to report. But like many Iraqis plunged into what suddenly has become a dangerous profession, she has become much more careful of where she goes and whom she interviews.

In eight years living in and covering Iraq until the fall of last year, the unimaginable became commonplace, the descent measured in ever more horrifyingly creative attacks that have engulfed journalists, humanitarian workers, and others whose professions we once thought carried some protection. The unspoken assumptions about why we were exempt—"We're just journalists. We mean well. Don't shoot us."—now seem incredibly naive. The combination of random carnage and targeted violence makes the dangers of covering the war three years ago—pressing against hillsides to avoid mortars, ducking behind vehicles to escape gunfire—seem strangely innocent.

Jane Arraf, the 2005-06 Edward R. Murrow Press Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, is CNN's former Baghdad bureau chief and senior Baghdad correspondent. Arraf covered Iraq for CNN from late 1997 to 2005. She reported extensively from Iraq for Reuters after the 1991 Gulf War.

‘Whose side are you on?’ is a question I hear frequently from Americans.

I’m not sure when that reassuring, imaginary line separating those of us who documented other people’s tragedies disappeared. Perhaps it was watching blood-soaked friends—the lucky ones—stumble out of the wreckage of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad on August 19, 2003, and knowing that if they were targets, anyone could be. Or standing at the bombed-out entrance of the International Committee of the Red Cross where images much too gory to show on American television drove home the point that this was a new kind of war.

For months after the fall of Baghdad in April 2003, explosions were newsworthy enough and the city calm enough that we would dash out with a satellite truck to report from the scene. A year into the war, those who ran to a bomb blast risked death from secondary explosions

designed to kill rescuers and bystanders, or potential violence by Iraqis enraged at Western television crews covering what they saw as U.S.-inflicted misery.

In January 2004, on the highway from Hillah, south of Baghdad, gunmen in a vehicle opened fire on a CNN convoy, killing our translator/producer Duraid Isa Mohammad and our driver Yasser Khatab. Duraid, young, bright, and eager, worked almost all the time. The first time I met his young wife was when I knocked on their door to tell her he had been killed. After they were buried, in a foreshadowing of what would become an epidemic of kidnappings, our other drivers told us some of them had been approached more than once by unknown Iraqis and offered money to hand us over. “We always said no,” they told us.

The first time a colleague or a friend is killed, it’s unimaginable, almost heart-stopping. A few deaths later,

you brace yourself almost every time the phone rings to try to lessen the shock. The fear of taking anyone out on assignment with you is almost paralyzing until you remember that the food we eat and the fuel we use in places like Baghdad is brought to us by people also risking their lives.

And increasingly, the news sent around the world about the war in Iraq is delivered by Iraqis, most of them stringers and fixers and freelancers. Many are the often-anonymous heroes of the wire services and television agencies that are the building blocks for foreign correspondents’ stories. Of the roughly 80 journalists killed in the conflict so far, the vast majority are Iraqis, by CPJ’s count. But the number of places where even Iraqis can operate as journalists is shrinking. It was once enough to be from a region or an ethnic group or a town. Now relative safety is increasingly about which neighborhood or which family or tribe you are from.

I try to tell my Iraqi colleagues that, at best, the media companies they work for are like a small family business where the value of their employees goes beyond “what have you done for me lately.” But it is always a business, sometimes with disturbing double standards. There are cases of local staff not given safety equipment, local employees who have fled the country after years of service only to be abandoned by their employers, and American freelance journalists on contract to major organizations who arrive in Iraq with no insurance. The real test of whether media companies are serious about safety isn’t in the speeches by executives saying how much they care—it’s in how the company treats its drivers.

I’ve known news organizations that take immense care of their local staff, keeping them on the payroll when it’s too dangerous to work and they have no correspondents in the country, and keeping track of their families. And I’ve known others where local workers are treated as a series of potential problems with unpronounceable names.

The killings and kidnappings have driven journalists as well as the people we cover indoors and underground. In Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, foreign journalists were tolerated but seen by the regime as potential enemies. One of our biggest concerns was keeping those Iraqis who would talk to us out of trouble. We’ve almost come full circle. While journalists are at risk holding cameras in Baghdad streets, Iraqis are equally at risk having their faces shown on television.

In prewar Iraq, the concept that a journalist could be independent of a government or interest group was unfathomable. In today’s increasingly sectarian Iraq, that perception is still part of the danger. Many newspapers and radio and television stations are financed by or affiliated with a political party or religious faction. The biggest Arabic-language networks have ties to other Arab countries or are funded by the United States.

Because of the danger of going out, we increasingly rely on the telephone and second- or third-hand sources. I even-

tually found the only way I could do firsthand reporting and talk to Iraqis around the country was to be embedded, with all of the risks and limitations that go along with it.

I’ve been on both sides—with U.S. forces who believe they were sent to help Iraqis and with local people who want the Americans out. Embedded with U.S. soldiers and Marines, we’ve braved the same dangers. We get immense credit from the troops we cover for taking those risks; I know that they would put their lives on the line for us. Unembedded, facing the threat of being shot or arrested by nervous U.S. soldiers, I’ve seen how easily a trusted reporter turns into a potential security risk. Multiply that a



A Baghdad photo display is dedicated to Iraqi journalists who have lost their lives in the war. The vast majority of journalists killed in the conflict are Iraqi.



Iraqis through the shattered Shiite Golden Mosque in Samarra in February 2006. Al-Arabiya correspondent Atwar Bahjat and two crew members were murdered while filming nearby.

hundred times for Iraqi journalists in a country where anyone with a camera covering insurgents is assumed to be one of them and fair game for U.S. troops.

On a recent satellite radio program, one of the other guests—a former U.S. soldier turned reporter—was practically jumping out of his chair, complaining about “pampered reporters” who never left their hotels in the Green Zone. When I pointed out that more than 75 journalists had been killed covering the conflict, he told me that was a false equation—that only two American journalists had died.

Add to all the risks in covering Iraq one more—that despite the danger we face to tell those stories, viewers and readers don’t believe us.

“Whose side are you on?” is a question I hear frequently from Americans complaining about “negative” reporting from Iraq. I try to explain that for many of us, our allegiance is to journalism first and our country second—that an independent press is vital to a strong democracy. In a climate where not just the rules but the definition of a journalist is changing, it’s an answer that satisfies almost no one. ■

JOURNALISTS KILLED IN IRAQ

AS OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2006

By region or nation:

Iraqi	58
European	11
Arab countries	3
United States	2
All other countries:	5

By gender:

Men	73
Women	6

Status:

Embedded	6
Non-embedded (or "unilateral")	73

News organization:

Iraqi	42
International	37

By circumstance:

Murder	43
Crossfire / acts of war	36

By province:

Baghdad	44
Nineveh	11
Arbil	6
Anbar	5
Salehaddin	4
Basrah	3
Diyala	2
Karbala	1
Najaf	1
Sulaymaniya	1
Unclear	1

Responsibility for death:

Insurgent action	53
U.S. fire	14
Iraqi armed forces	3
(during U.S. invasion)	
Iraqi armed forces	1
(post-U.S. invasion)	
Source unconfirmed	8

In addition, 28 media support workers have been killed.

Layout: Justin Goldberg Reporting: Ivan Karakashian

For more details,
visit www.cpi.org

2006: 19

1 Atwar Bahjat, Al-Arabiya; Mahmoud Za'al, Baghdad TV; 2 Khaled Mahmoud al-Falahi, Wasan Productions and Al-Arabiya; 3 Adnan Khairallah, Wasan Productions and Al-Arabiya; Munsuf Abdallah al-Khaldi, Baghdad TV; 4 Amjad Hameed, Al-Iraqiya; Muhsin Khudhair, *Alef Ba*; 5 Kamal Manahi Anbar, Institute for War & Peace Reporting; So'oud Muzahim al-Shoumari, Al-Baghdadia; Laith al-Dulaimi, *Al-Nahrain*; 6 Paul Douglas, CBS; 7 James Brolan, CBS; 8 Ali Jaafar, Al-Iraqiya; Ibrahim Seneid, *Al-Bashara*; Adel Naji al-Mansouri, Al-Alam; Mohammad Abbas Mohammad, *Al-Bayannah Al-Jadida*; Ismail Amin Ali, freelance; Abdel Karim al-Rubai, *Al-Sabah*; Safa Isma'il Enad, freelance



2005: 22

9 Raeda Wazzan, Al-Iraqiya; 10 Hussam Sarsam, Kurdistan TV; 11 Ahmed Jabbar Hashim, *Al-Sabah*; 12 Fadhil Hazem Fadhil, Al-Hurriya; 13 Ali Ibrahim Issa, Al-Hurriya; 14 Saman Abdullah Izzedine, Kirkuk TV; Ahmed al-Rubai'i, *Al-Sabah*; Saleh Ibrahim, Associated Press Television News; Ahmed Adam, *Al-Mada*; Najem Abed Khudair, *Al-Mada*; 15 Jerges Mahmood Mohamad Suleiman, Nineveh TV; Maha Ibrahim, Baghdad TV; Ahmed Wael Bakri, Al-Sharqiyah; 16 Khaled al-Attar, Al-Iraqiya; 17 Adnan al-Bayati, TG3; 18 Steven Vincent, freelance; Rafed Mahmoud Said al-Anbagy, Diyala TV and Radio; 19 Waleed Khaled, Reuters; Hind Ismail, *As-Saffir*; Fakher Haider, *The New York Times*; 20 Firas Maadidi, *As-Saffir* and *Al-Masar*; Mohammed Haroon, *Al-Kadiya*

21 Duraid Isa Mohammed, CNN; 22 Ayoub Mohamed, Kurdistan TV; Safir Nader, Qulan TV; Haymin Mohamed Salih, Qulan TV; Semko Karim Mohyideen, freelance; Abdel Sattar Abdel Karim, *Al Ta'akhy*; 23 Gharib Mohamed Salih, Kurdistan TV; 24 Nadia Nasrat, Diyala TV; 25 Ali Abdel Aziz, Al-Arabiya; 26 Ali al-Khatib, Al-Arabiya; Burhan Mohamed Mazhour, ABC; 27 Asaad Kadhim, Al-Iraqiya; 28 Waldemar Milewicz, TVP; 29 Mounir Bouamrane, TVP; 30 Rashid Hamid Wali, Al-Jazeera; Shinsuke Hashida, freelance; Kotaro Ogawa, freelance; Mahmoud Hamid Abbas, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen; 31 Enzo Baldoni, freelance; 32 Mazen al-Tumeizi, Al-Arabiya; 33 Dina Mohammed Hassan, Al-Hurriya; 34 Karam Hussein, European Pressphoto Agency; Dhia Najim, freelance; Wadallah Sarhan, *Akhbar al-Mosul*



2004: 24

35 Paul Moran, freelance; 36 Terry Lloyd, ITV News; 37 Kaveh Golestan, freelance; 38 Michael Kelly, *Atlantic Monthly & The Washington Post*; 39 Christian Liebig, *Focus*; 40 Julio Anguita Parrado, *El Mundo*; 41 Tareq Ayyoub, Al-Jazeera; 42 José Couso, Telecinco; 43 Taras Protsyuk, Reuters; 44 Richard Wild, freelance; 45 Jeremy Little, NBC; 46 Mazen Dana, Reuters; 47 Ahmad Kareem, Kurdistan TV; 48 Ahmed Shawkat, *Bilah Ittijah*

The Arc of War

In Cambodia, war changed and coverage grew more perilous.

By Richard Pyle

War, as covered by the international press, has undergone radical change in the past three decades. Reporters, photographers, and camera crews can no longer depend on certain verities: the “non-combatant” status conferred by carrying press credentials, the right to move about and cover conflict at one’s own risk. That one might become a prisoner of war, but not a hostage. And that one might be killed, but not arbitrarily at the hands of political or religious zealots.

To remember when those assumptions were still valid, one must refer back to that generally unlamented conflict, Vietnam, where even in the midst of chaos correspondents could depend on a structured environment that enabled them to do their jobs. In Vietnam, accredited journalists enjoyed access to the battlefield and freedom to report unmatched in any war since. Despite quarrels over news content, the U.S. and South Vietnamese military recognized the role of news media and provided generous support, from transportation to medical aid. The job was still dangerous, of course—between 1965 and 1975, 33 foreign journalists were killed in Vietnam and four in Laos. But the few who risked making contact with communist forces, or were captured by them, managed to return safely.

When the war spread openly to neighboring Cambodia in 1970, reporters went into the field with the same expectations—that the right to be nonbelligerent observers was understood and that a press pass was a good, if not airtight, guarantor of safe passage in contested areas. It did not work out that way.

Within weeks, journalists began vanishing on day trips

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Before the dangers of running Cambodia’s roads were fully realized, 34 journalists were dead or missing.

outside Phnom Penh. The shadowy guerrillas who controlled the deceptively bucolic countryside assumed foreigners were spies. Some were summarily executed, others kidnapped—not for ransom, just scooped into oblivion. Before the perils of running Cambodia’s roads were fully realized, 34 media members were dead or missing.

“The fanatical Khmer Rouge insurgents were indifferent to the international norms that had protected our profession,” my former Indochina colleague Peter Arnett recalled for CPJ. “They murdered far more captured Western and local journalists than they released, seeing the media as political agents of their governments—an argument used by the insurgents in Beirut in the 1980s and their counterparts in Iraq today as they kidnap journalists and threaten their lives.”

That was where the established structure—the order that both enabled and protected eyewitness coverage of conflicts—started to disintegrate. The folly of treating Cambodia’s war like previous ones peaked in May 1970, when nine members of three television crews, two from CBS and one from NBC, were murdered in what began as a highway ambush.

The next stage was the near-anarchy of Lebanon’s civil war in the mid-1970s. Although press casualties there consisted of two local photographers killed at Beirut’s Green Line, journalists found themselves always at risk. Just getting to Beirut over land was dangerous. The armed gangs that passed for Muslim and Christian armies (described by one Western reporter who had seen the musical *West Side Story* as “the Jets and the Sharks with machine guns”) were paranoid and trigger-happy. One dared not show the wrong pass to those manning roadblocks.

In 1976, I caught a ride from Damascus to Beirut with a Lebanese fixer named George. We were going through Muslim-controlled territory, where Christians were at risk of being killed, when George confided that he was a Christian using fake credentials. After twice picking up hitchhikers

carrying Kalashnikovs, I was much relieved when George dropped me at The Associated Press bureau in Muslim-controlled West Beirut. Simple chance—the ill-chosen word, the wrong look—could have altered that journey for the worse.

Civil conflicts, inherently more lawless, have been the most dangerous for journalists in recent decades. In most of these conflicts—including Iraq, Algeria, and Colombia—murder has been a more common cause of death among journalists than combat itself. More conventional, international wars such as Iran-Iraq and the 1991 Gulf War have yielded far lower casualty rates. Among nine journalist deaths during the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, only three were combat casualties. The only casualties related to Operation Desert Storm were three people murdered and one presumed dead in its aftermath.

After covering the first war in Iraq, seeing this current conflict from afar has been eye-opening. Iraq has become an unspeakable charnel house, where shocking numbers of citizens die daily in bombings, kidnap-murders, and grisly assassinations. Since the war began in 2003, about 80 journalists have been killed, most of them Iraqis. Among roughly the same overall number in Indochina, the locals could be counted on one hand. Cambodia presaged murder as a risk in war reporting—and Iraq has seen its fulfillment.

Where once a “Press” sign taped to the windshield of a jeep might serve as a shield for the enterprising, today it’s an invitation to death. “A journalist is a foreigner, and a foreigner is a target. Those working with foreigners are targets,” *The Washington Post’s* Anthony Shadid told a Harvard audience in 2004. “It’s that simple.”

The absence of structure—where there is no clear-cut or effective authority, no recognition of “noncombatant” status, no way to distinguish between criminals and paramilitary groups, no law to prevent or punish anyone’s actions—has created a demand for new ideas about war coverage and journalist security. Many news organizations today send correspondents to special schools to learn to recognize danger, to avoid being taken hostage, and to survive if the latter happens.

Those who get into war reporting, if they stay with it, find that no two conflicts are alike. Just as the military must resist the urge to fight every new war as the last one, journalists must constantly re-educate themselves to the realities of each new conflict.

Yet journalists still need to get out and hear the voices of local people. For that, old rules may be as important today: Never go alone. Know the territory. Military expertise is helpful to staying alive. And, in my opinion, carrying a gun is rarely if ever worth compromising one’s status as a noncombatant. The biggest truth is still the same. War journalism is a dangerous trade, and the key to survival, above all, is common sense. It’s the reason a lot of us are still walking around. ■

DEATHS IN CONFLICT

The 12 deadliest conflicts for journalists since CPJ was founded in 1981:

IRAQ (2003 - present)	79
ALGERIA (1993 – 1996)	58
COLOMBIA (1986 – present)	52
BALKANS (1991 – 1995)	36
PHILIPPINES (1983 – 1987)	36
TURKEY (1984 – 1999)	22



A Croat civilian is escorted at gunpoint by Yugoslav soldiers and Serbian volunteers in Vukovar, Croatia, in 1991 – AP/Srdjan Ilic

TAJIKISTAN (1992 – 1996)	16
SIERRA LEONE (1997 – 2000)	15
AFGHANISTAN (2001 – 2004)	9
SOMALIA (1993 – 1995)	9
KOSOVO (1999 – 2001)	7
FIRST IRAQ WAR (1991)	4



People remove debris after a truck bomb exploded east of Algiers in October 1995, killing six and injuring dozens – AP

Four Weeks in Lebanon

A BBC reporter confronts a dilemma—how to cover a conflict without getting killed on the roads.

By Jim Muir

Jim Muir, a BBC Middle East correspondent, covered the Israel-Hezbollah conflict from the Lebanese port city of Tyre. Here is his account.

TYRE, Lebanon

After a little research, we decided to set up shop in the Tyre Rest House, a beach complex on the southern outskirts patronized by the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations. We started off as a small team that included a cameraman, producer, and local driver/fixer.

The Rest House was very exposed, and for that very reason offered an excellent vantage point and live position for TV. To the south, a panoramic view of the sandy bay and rugged headlands curving around to Naqoura, the border point where the U.N. forces, UNIFIL, have their headquarters. To the east, the hills and villages that were to absorb so much Israeli firepower in the days to come. To the north, Tyre itself, which was selectively hit by surgical strikes but not pulverized like parts of Beirut's southern suburbs or some of the key villages. To the west, of course, the sea, with Israeli warships lurking in the haze, pumping missiles and shells into the hills and villages inland.

The early days were jittery. On July 20, the United Nations brought in a boat to evacuate its own dependents and other foreign nationals. The Rest House was the main assembly point, so we were swamped with humanity for a couple of days—then suddenly deserted.

With Israeli jets dropping leaflets telling everybody to get out of the south, even the Rest House staff melted away. At one stage, only the BBC and Al-Alam, the Iranian Arabic-language news channel, were left. Good company to be caught in, I thought, when the Israelis come rumbling up the coast, as many expected.

We knew that the United Nations had officially informed Israel that it retained a presence at the Rest House and that international press and civilians were there. Any reassurance that might convey evaporated rapidly as events developed. Israel was striking with pinpoint accuracy and stun-

ningly powerful munitions. But in the absence of clearly defined Hezbollah military targets, it became clear there was no dependable limit to what might be struck. That became our major and continuing dilemma: how to move around and cover the story without getting killed on the roads.

On July 23, I noted that around 15 civilian vehicles were hit in the Tyre area, including one carrying already-wounded people to the Najm hospital. A Lebanese news photographer, 23-year-old Layal Najib, was killed when her car was hit near Qana.

That night at 10:30, two clearly marked and illuminated Lebanese Red Cross ambulances were hit with separate missiles as they were transferring patients at the roadside, also near Qana. All six Red Cross paramedics were wounded, as were the three patients in the ambulance, one of them losing a leg.

Incomprehensible things were happening. Two days later, the three-story building in Khiam housing four unarmed U.N. military observers from the Observer Group Lebanon was demolished by precision bombs after seven hours of shelling, including four direct hits, during which the United Nations was constantly remonstrating with the Israelis.

All this meant that we restricted our movements to the Tyre area, and with some trepidation at that.

But on July 28, our press vehicle and others, optimistically emblazoned with big signs saying, "TV," joined a convoy loosely organized by the Australian embassy that was heading for the border village of Yaroun to evacuate Australian passport-holders trapped there. Some of the press based in Jerusalem made contact with the Israel Defense Forces to flag up the convoy.

Because of heavy fighting we got only as far as Rmaish, a Christian town crammed with local displaced people. The convoy picked up as many as it could and headed back for Naqoura to return to Tyre. As we approached the coast, two mortars exploded, hitting one of the press cars. The driver and a cameraman for the German TV station N24 were wounded.



Smoke rises above the Lebanese city of Tyre after an Israeli missile strike in July.

As our building shook at any hour of day or night to the blasts of heavy munitions nearby, we could take little comfort from the fading blue U.N. flag hopefully draped on the concrete near an empty swimming pool.

Any agonizing over our mobility was removed on August 8, when the Israelis dropped leaflets unequivocally warning that any vehicle moving on the roads south of the Litani River would be hit. There were no exceptions. We had to take to our feet and walk anywhere we wanted to go.

Our fear, of course, was that Hezbollah would start firing rockets from next to the building, and that we would get hit in the inevitable riposte. Their nearest missile positions, a kilometer away, prompted the only restriction we encountered from Hezbollah. One day, when there was a row of cameras at the live position, rockets started streaking out of the hills to the east. The images went out live on Reuters TV and APTN.

I wondered how long it would be before we got a visit. An hour or two later, a nervous Lebanese Army officer tried to forbid the filming of rockets going out live, arguing that we were endangering civilians. We argued back, he went away.

A few hours later, at night, Hezbollah itself turned up. We were told firmly but politely, that anyone filming outgoing rocket fire would have his camera confiscated. No argument was brooked. Lots of consultation within the BBC resulted in a formula: If rockets were fired from behind us while we were live, we would pan away and explain that we

had been asked not to show the location of fire because we were told it might endanger civilians.

The issue didn't arise while we were on the air. Apart from that, we had no interference from Hezbollah, although on one occasion, another TV crew was assaulted by an angry crowd while trying to film an apartment building struck by a small missile. As the August 14 cease-fire approached, we had virtually no contact with Hezbollah and were left to get on with the job as best we could. It was in Hezbollah's interest to allow maximum press coverage since the facts on the ground—hundreds of civilians crushed under the rubble of their own homes—spoke for themselves.

I had just arrived in Lebanon from Iraq, where the conflict is very different—much less dangerous in terms of being bombed, but far more dangerous in terms of being kidnapped and murdered, a risk that never crossed our minds in South Lebanon.

We had no sense that the Israelis were deliberately targeting the media to suppress our images—but equally, they weren't going out of their way to facilitate our job by entertaining exceptions to the general ban on road travel.

Apart from the pervasive dread of being struck by high-tech munitions guided by ubiquitous overhead drones, our living conditions were luxurious by war standards. We had water and electricity almost all of the time, TV and air-conditioning, and the mobile phones rarely stopped working. In that sense—and in that sense only—it was a good war. ■

A New Course

War reporters must grasp history, foreign policy, and humanitarian law.

By Roy Gutman

War is a school for journalists, but little hard-gained experience gets passed on other than around a bar or in the form of war stories. We should do something about this by setting up a standard curriculum to train the next generation to tackle this worst of human cases. Not that every journalist should dodge bullets, but if a reporter has confidence in managing the ultimate journalistic challenge, everything else is a lesser case.

Some lessons can be learned only at the scene, while others require time and distance to digest. When I arrived in Beirut in 1982 during the first Israeli invasion, the foremost question was how to cross the Green Line to the Muslim west controlled by the Palestine Liberation Organization. Just go, don't wait for others, colleagues advised. One step at a time and feigning nonchalance, I traversed the no-man's land on a slow slalom around dirt barricades, destroyed cars, and heaps of rubble, no doubt many eyes and weapons trained on me. At three checkpoints no one challenged my U.S. press credentials. "Piece of cake," I muttered under my breath as I boarded a taxi at the other side.

Reporting on the ground during the Israeli siege was invaluable experience, but the lingering question, now apt as never before, could not be covered there and then. What did the war accomplish? Looking back, we were covering the sound and light show, a war of high-tech fixes by the militarily superior side and a less-than-bravura performance by a doomed Palestinian resistance.

A quarter century later, as Israel again resorted to overwhelming force in response to deliberate provocation, the question resurfaced as to how reporters can put it into context. Not so easy a task for a new generation of journalists at a time when news organizations are retrenching in overseas coverage. Technology has vastly improved the ability to transmit news, but the tools for comprehending it are decid-

edly old-fashioned: an understanding of the history of the place and the ways of conflict, a grasp of the aims and strategy of the participants, knowledge of humanitarian law, and a willingness to ask questions until there are factual answers.

So this is the first theme of any curriculum—even more basic than training in how to survive a hazardous environment, to recognize weapons types, and to administer first aid. Reporters must grasp how force, if linked to clear, attainable goals, can serve foreign policy, and if not so linked, can undermine national security and kick the problem down the road.

The wars over the breakup of Yugoslavia presented a different kind of challenge in the 1990s: gaining and keeping editors' interest while the U.S. government and the foreign policy elite felt that Slobodan Milosevic's rampage fell below the threshold of attention. The sound and light show—the air assaults on Slovenia and on Dubrovnik—got the public's attention, but the real conquest was occurring in unfamiliar locales in Croatia. The relentless shelling of inland towns, the slow capture of territory by the Serb-led army, the installation of criminal regimes in the seized territories, the expulsion of the civilian population, and the destruction of its culture got, at best, minimal attention. Either we failed to uncover these stories or we did not tell them in a compelling way.

In the Bosnian war, the third of Milosevic's four between 1991 and 1999, atrocities against civilians became my central theme, and that helped put the story on the map. But years later I realized that many of the crimes I reported in Bosnia had already occurred in Croatia—I just did not recognize them as such.

Visiting a hospital near Vukovar, where every window was shot out, every operating room destroyed, every Red Cross insignia used for target practice, I wrote about the patients and their stories, the heroic doctors, and the plight of the Croats. Yet I mentioned the destruction of the hospital only in passing. That this was a possible war crime to be investigated did not occur to me. It turned out that five hospitals had been destroyed in much the same way at the same time—a story that would have made headlines had I

and other journalists not missed the big picture. The realization that we had missed a dimension in our coverage led a group of journalists, among them David Rieff and photographer Gilles Peress, to produce *Crimes of War*, an A-to-Z guide to humanitarian law. The laws of armed conflict should be part of our tool kit as reporters.

Other than in the Balkans, we in the media have rarely cast a powerful spotlight on war crimes, and certainly not in a timely way to draw attention to seemingly obscure, faraway wars. There is no clearer example than Afghanistan, where a war between homegrown nationalists and radical Islamists favoring regionwide revolution raged for five years with too little on-the-ground reporting. "Small" wars turn out to be anything but small; just as war gave cover for the "Greater Serbia" chauvinists to carry out their concealed agenda to destroy the Muslim presence in the southern Balkans, other wars provide a cover for other national agendas.

The Afghan internal conflict provided cover for Osama bin Laden to train militants and dispatch them to destroy U.S. embassies, a Navy destroyer, and eventually the World Trade Center. The CIA and FBI were not the only institutions that failed to provide specific warning. The U.S. media never fully explained what had happened in Afghanistan after 1998: A terrorist with global reach had effectively

hijacked a state. The moral is that seemingly obscure, faraway wars each contain the seeds of a much bigger war, of massive crimes against humanity, even genocide, and of chaos that will infect the region and the world. The wars to watch are often the ones no one is covering.

Today, journalism is under attack as never before and not just from the accountants at home. Foreign press credentials may be respected by factions in Lebanon, but not everywhere. In Iraq, the insurgents seeking to topple the U.S.-backed government have made the media a major and direct target. Islamists in general see no need to accept news reporters in their professional function, except to manipulate them and to use the media platform for propaganda—and that greatly limits our ability to do our job. The long-term challenge in Iraq is to grasp the nature of the conflict and to assess whether the U.S. military is using methods that will inflame or counter it.

Journalism has gotten a lot harder as well as more dangerous. Training in force and foreign policy, laws of war, strategy and tactics, and the ways of insurgency will not bring better coverage overnight. But it might help us restore purpose to our profession at a time of growing self-doubt. We can use all the help we can get. ■



Patients were forced to flee after a hospital came under attack in the Croatian town of Vukovar in November 1991.

Roy Gutman, *Newsday* foreign editor, is winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on human rights violations in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Gutman has organized courses at Medill School of Journalism on war and terrorism, was co-editor of *Crimes of War* (W.W. Norton, 1998), and has just completed a book about 1990s Afghanistan.



Sami Muhyideen al-Haj

A Pakistani border guard watches the Chaman crossing in October 2003.

The Enemy?

Al-Jazeera's Sami al-Haj has been jailed for five years without charge or trial. At the U.S. base in Guantanamo, he's called an enemy combatant. Will he get to defend himself?

By Joel Campagna

December 15, 2001, dawned overcast at Pakistan's Chaman crossing point into Afghanistan, and Al-Jazeera reporter Abdelhaq Sadah and cameraman Sami Muhyideen al-Haj were anxious to get moving. Just across the border, the Taliban had fled Kandahar, their rule effectively ended by a fierce U.S. air and Afghan ground assault. The pair's assignment was to cover the aftermath.

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They wouldn't get far, as Sadah recalls today. When they presented their passports, a Pakistani border guard grew angry. Sadah could go through, the officer barked, but there was a problem with al-Haj's passport. The officer produced an English-language notice from Pakistani intelligence instructing border guards to apprehend al-Haj for suspected links to al-Qaeda, Sadah recalled.

Both journalists were puzzled. Several times over two months, al-Haj had crossed Chaman with another Al-Jazeera crew without incident. Just a few days earlier, Sadah and al-Haj had traveled across the border to Spinboldak, where they reported on damage to the main Afghan road from Chaman to Kandahar.

Al-Haj thought there was a misunderstanding. The written order that the border guard produced listed the number of his old Sudanese passport, which he had lost two years earlier. A Pakistani intelligence official identifying himself as Major Nadeem arrived at the border later that day and told the two journalists not to worry. The next morning, Sadah said, the major drove off with al-Haj.

"Since that time, I have not seen Sami," Sadah told CPJ. Neither have al-Haj's colleagues, family, and friends.

Al-Haj thus began an odyssey that would take him from Pakistan to Afghanistan and then on to an 8-by-7-foot detention cell at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where he remains today with some 450 other detainees the Bush administration has designated "enemy combatants."

Championed as a prisoner of conscience on Al-Jazeera though virtually unknown in U.S. media circles, al-Haj is the only confirmed journalist now imprisoned at Guantanamo. The U.S. military alleges that he worked as a financial courier for Chechen rebels, and that he assisted al-Qaeda and extremist figures. In one taped message, Osama bin Laden purportedly called for his release.

Yet al-Haj has been held for nearly five years on the basis of secret evidence; he has not been convicted or even charged with a crime. Until this year—when an Associated Press lawsuit prompted the Pentagon to identify the detainees—the military would not acknowledge al-Haj was in custody. Al-Haj's lawyer, who has been barred from attending his client's hearings, has called the allegations baseless and the justice system at Guantanamo a sham.

"There is absolutely zero evidence that he has any history in terrorism at all," said Clive Stafford Smith, legal director of Reprieve, a London-based human rights group, who took up al-Haj's case in 2005. Stafford Smith contends that al-Haj's continued detention is political, and the main focus of

U.S. interrogators has not been al-Haj's alleged terrorist activities but obtaining intelligence on Al-Jazeera and its staff.

Whatever the truth, al-Haj's detention has raised questions about the U.S. military's treatment of journalists as it pursues a global war on terrorism. In 2005, the U.S. detention of al-Haj and at least four journalists in Iraq placed the United States sixth among countries jailing journalists, just behind Uzbekistan and tied with Burma. In Iraq, each journalist was held for months without charge. Each was eventually freed; no charges were substantiated in any of the cases.

Al-Haj's supporters ask that he be given a fair trial. In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Bush administration must ensure minimal due process for Guantanamo detainees. By September, Congress approved guidelines that allow detainees the right to counsel and the right to see evidence against them. But they still permit indefinite detention and the use of evidence obtained through coercion or hearsay.

Following his detention at Chaman, Sami al-Haj spent the next 23 days in the custody of Pakistani intelligence officials before being taken to the nearby city of Quetta, where he was handed over to U.S. forces, according to Al-Jazeera.

Al-Haj was soon taken to the newly established U.S. air base at Bagram, outside the Afghan capital Kabul, for 16 days which, by his account, were the "longest days of my life." Al-Haj told Stafford Smith that he was severely beaten by U.S. troops, who accused him of recording videos of Osama bin Laden for Al-Jazeera. Al-Haj denied the accusation, and Stafford Smith said he believes the military confused his client with another, similarly named cameraman. The accusation has not resurfaced publicly.

On January 23, 2002, the U.S. military brought al-Haj to Kandahar where he remained until June 13, when he was transported to Guantanamo Bay, bound and gagged, along with dozens of other prisoners. Through his lawyer and in letters he has written from prison, al-Haj has described harsh conditions at Guantanamo and has accused U.S. troops of depriving him of sleep as an interrogation technique. He said he suffers from rheumatism and has been denied medication to prevent a recurrence of throat cancer.

Al-Haj's disappearance wasn't made public until September 18, 2002, when Al-Jazeera announced in a press release that its cameraman was being held at Guantanamo. For months, the station said, it sought to resolve the matter through behind-the-scenes contacts with Pakistani and U.S. officials, fearing that publicity would jeopardize any release.

Pakistani intelligence warned one of the station's reporters not to inquire about al-Haj. U.S. officials were silent.

"We have not really received any official detail from the Americans about what exactly the charges are," said Wad-dah Khanfar, Al-Jazeera's general manager.

To viewers of the Arab world's most watched news channel, al-Haj is a familiar face. Al-Jazeera regularly reports on developments in his case, has devoted a section of its popular Web site to the detained journalist, and, this year, broadcast a 53-minute documentary detailing his story. Yet for all the attention, al-Haj remains an enigma.

Few Al-Jazeera staffers knew him well during his brief stint at the station. By all accounts, he had virtually no experience in journalism before joining one of the world's most influential news organizations.

Born in 1969 and raised in central Sudan, al-Haj showed a keen interest in media, according to his younger brother, Asim, who recalled that he "loved reading and writing, and also photography." Asim and another family member said al-Haj studied English in India.

Discouraged by the lack of journalism opportunities in Sudan, Asim said, he bypassed a career in media and got a job in the United Arab Emirates. In the late 1990s, he worked as an administrative assistant for the Sharjah-based Union Beverages, which makes soft drinks for the Middle East and Asia. His lawyer, Stafford Smith, said al-Haj also worked for an import-export company called Romat International. Public listings show Union Beverages and Romat belong to a group of companies owned by Muhammad Abdullah al-Umran, a UAE national.

At around the same time, al-Haj met his wife, Asma, an Azeri national. They married in 1998, had a son, Muhammad, now 6, and later took up residence in Doha, Qatar.

Asma said her husband started work at Al-Jazeera in April 2000 after responding to an employment ad. He had ambition, knowledge of computers, and a strong command of English, she told CPJ. Al-Haj's lawyer and Al-Jazeera journalists said al-Haj started on a freelance basis as a trainee. Al-Jazeera reported that he was initially assigned to help cover Chechnya but never traveled there.

Fawzi al-Bushra, a long-time Al-Jazeera reporter and fellow Sudanese national, befriended al-Haj and remembers him as quiet and inexperienced but eager to prove himself. "He was a man with no credentials," al-Bushra remembered. Still, al-Bushra and other Al-Jazeera reporters said it wasn't unusual for the station to train novice journalists.

By most accounts, al-Haj's big opportunity came after 9/11 and the subsequent U.S.-led assault to unseat the Taliban in Afghanistan. Al-Jazeera, which prized exclusive images from war zones, signed al-Haj to a contract at a time when it needed cameramen, said former station director Muhammad Jasem Ali. "Sami had some training in camera and we trained him in videophone," Ali said, noting that it was difficult to find anyone willing to go to "hot areas" like Afghanistan.

Al-Haj was eager to demonstrate his worth. Several Al-Jazeera staffers said he volunteered to go to Afghanistan when there were few takers for the assignment. Al-Bushra said he advised his inexperienced colleague against going, but al-Haj insisted. "I remember saying, 'You are going to a war, not a picnic,'" al-Bushra said. "He said, 'OK, but that will give me an opportunity to prove myself.'"

Al-Haj's family was nervous, too. "But after a long discussion Sami said ... he couldn't say no because he was new," said his brother, Asim.

In October 2001, new contract with Al-Jazeera in hand, al-Haj joined a crew headed by reporter Youssef al-Shouly in Taliban-controlled southeastern Afghanistan. The men worked together for nearly two months, often putting in 15-hour days, al-Shouly recalled. Using a handheld camera and videophone, al-Haj documented the civilian fallout from U.S. bombs, a common feature of Al-Jazeera's war reporting, and his shots were some of the only images coming from southeastern Afghanistan at the time. Al-Haj could be moved to tears by the bombing, al-Shouly said.

Al-Shouly and al-Haj were briefly detained by Taliban forces for reporting without authorization, according to Al-Jazeera. It was at Chaman, though, that al-Haj's career was put on indefinite hold.

For much of the last five years, the reasons surrounding al-Haj's detention have been secret. In September 2002, CPJ wrote to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, calling on the Pentagon to detail the basis for al-Haj's detention. CPJ received no response. Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

At CPJ's request, the Pentagon did provide declassified transcripts of hearings involving al-Haj. Those documents, along with information provided by al-Haj's attorney, shed some light on the case.

Military officials have made what appear to be several troubling allegations against al-Haj, according to a summary of his 2004 Combatant Status Review Tribunal, a hearing to

Reuters/Joe Skipper



About 450 detainees are held at the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay.

determine whether detainees were "enemy combatants," and a transcript of his 2005 Administrative Review Board, a parole-type proceeding.

The military labels the allegations as "evidence." But a review of the public documents shows that they are assertions of wrongdoing without the documentation or testimony normally considered by a court to be evidence. Supporting evidence, if any, is part of the U.S. military's classified file—off-limits to the public, al-Haj, and his lawyer.

One prime allegation is that al-Haj served as a financial courier for Chechen rebels and other armed groups in the Caucasus, delivering large sums of cash from the United Arab Emirates to Azerbaijan on several occasions between 1996 and 2000. Azerbaijan was a known transfer point for arms and materiel in support of Chechen armed groups.

U.S. officials allege that al-Haj made cash deliveries on behalf of his boss at Union Beverages, Abdel Latif al-Umran, to the Baku branch of the Islamic charity Al-Haramain. Al-Umran, son of the company's listed owner, did not respond to several requests for comment. The elder al-Umran also did not respond to messages from CPJ. Al-Haramain was not on a U.S. terrorist watch list at the time, although it was placed there after the September 11 attacks.

Al-Haj is also accused of meeting with and helping secure a visa for reputed al-Qaeda founder Mamdouh Mahmoud Salim, who was extradited to the United States on conspiracy charges stemming from the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa. Salim was convicted in 2004 of maiming a Manhattan corrections officer.

Military officials also say al-Haj falsified Romat Interna-

tional documents as a way to establish a corporation in Azerbaijan. Investigators allege Salim was affiliated with Romat, but provide no details about Salim's role or the intent of the alleged scheme.

On their face, other accusations appear to be an indictment of al-Haj's journalistic work. At his 2005 Administrative Review Board hearing, military officials said al-Haj had "interviewed several Taliban officials" and top al-Qaeda figure Abu Hafs al-Mauritani while in Afghanistan.

The U.S. government's classified file could include other allegations, but such accusations, if any, have not been disclosed to the public, al-Haj, or Stafford Smith.

In a January 2005 report in *The Wall Street Journal*, U.S. commanders acknowledged that many Guantanamo detainees are not a threat and likely have no valuable intelligence about al-Qaeda or the Taliban.

Stafford Smith said his client did nothing wrong and has no involvement with terror groups. He said al-Haj traveled to Azerbaijan for family and business reasons, delivering money for his boss to Islamic charities on one, or possibly two occasions.

"At the time Sami didn't know what it was for," said Stafford Smith, who said his client acted solely on his boss' instructions. "He thought it was going to charity." On one occasion, when he was carrying US\$220,000 to Azerbaijan, al-Haj declared the cash to customs officials, the lawyer said.

The defense lawyer said his client picked up Salim at an airport on one occasion, and drove his family around Dubai another time, both at his boss' direction. Stafford Smith

said that al-Haj helped secure a visa to the United Arab Emirates, not for Salim, but for Salim's relatives, again at the behest of his employer.

He said that the military has disclosed so little about the corporate document allegation that he can't respond substantively. "I really don't know what they are saying and neither does Sami," Stafford Smith said. "We haven't seen anything on this. Sami has no idea and can't respond."

In all, he said, the accusations are pernicious because—without evidence, witnesses, or even a statement of what crime was committed—they cannot be rebutted. "It is impossible to defend against 'charges' that are not real," he said. "I could charge you with being unpleasant to your mother, and you would have a hard time disproving it."

Most of Stafford Smith's information has come from his eight interviews with al-Haj at Guantanamo, information and documentation al-Haj has provided, and from recently declassified documents.

Stafford Smith cites shifting allegations against his client as evidence of the flawed justice system at Guantanamo. U.S. authorities have dropped at least three original accusations against al-Haj—that he had disseminated terrorist propaganda on the Internet; that he traveled extensively throughout the Middle East and Eastern Europe; and that he had arranged to transport shoulder-fired Stinger missiles from Afghanistan to Chechnya. The missile charge, the lawyer said, appeared to be based on a badly garbled conversation in which another detainee talked about an attempt to sell the weapons.

But for Stafford Smith, the most persuasive evidence that the case is a sham is that al-Haj's interrogators hardly seem interested in the allegations themselves. Virtually all of the roughly 130 interrogations al-Haj has been subjected to have focused on Al-Jazeera, Stafford Smith said. He said military officials have appeared intent on establishing a relationship between Al-Jazeera and al-Qaeda, questioning al-Haj about prominent network journalists, the station's finances, and how it pays for airline tickets.

At one point, U.S. military interrogators allegedly told al-Haj that he would be released if he agreed to inform U.S. intelligence authorities about the satellite news network's activities. Al-Haj refused. Bush administration officials have made no secret of their distaste for Al-Jazeera, repeatedly labeling its programming inflammatory and accusing the station of working with terrorists.

Al-Haj professed his innocence during a 40-minute hearing before the Administrative Review Board on August 12, 2005. Although he refused to answer questions about the accusations on the advice of his lawyer, a transcript of the hearing includes an impassioned plea to the review board. The transcript quotes al-Haj as saying that he misses his family deeply and that he does not understand how he could be considered an enemy combatant.

"With all due respect, a mistake has been made because I have never been a member of any terrorist group and I never took part in any terrorist or violent act," he told the board. "I can say without hesitation that I am not a threat to the United States or to anyone else. I strongly condemn any

act that is taken against innocent people, and I strongly condemn the tragic attack on the World Trade Center in New York. Islam properly understood would never allow the killing of innocent people in this way."

U.S. officials have described the detainees at Guantanamo Bay as "the worst of worst," but colleagues and relatives find it difficult to reconcile that description with the shy, unassuming man they knew. Stafford Smith calls him "one of the most cheerful and upbeat people—always smiling—that I have ever met."

"He loved his wife and son—he always spoke about them," said Al-Jazeera's Youssef al-Shouly, who remembers al-Haj as a practicing Muslim not given to extremist statements. "He is a gentle person," said al-Haj's wife, Asma. "He never did anything and the Americans realize that, but the Americans put themselves in a bind, and they cannot get out of it."

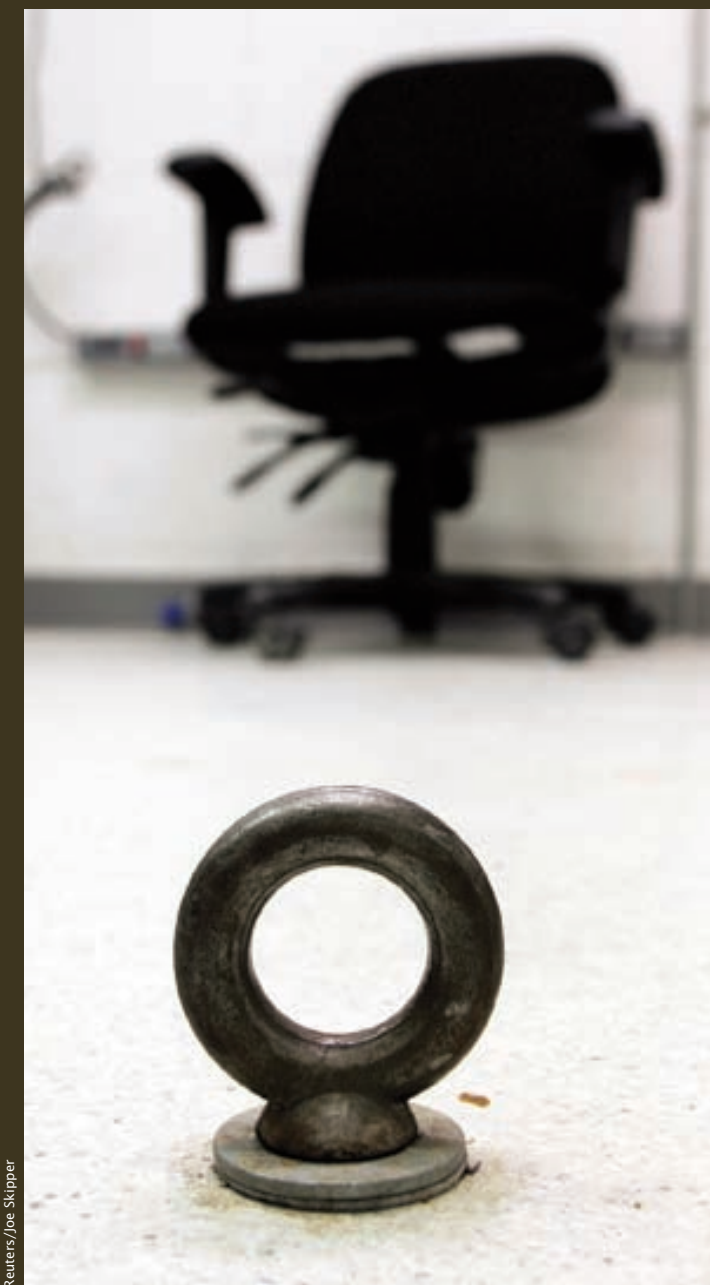
The review board has singled out al-Haj for very good behavior, and, according to hearing transcripts, he frequently leads prayers in cellblocks and teaches inmates English and the Quran.

Al-Haj's supporters maintain that his case has been hampered by bad publicity—or no publicity at all. Falling squarely in the first category is a purported audiotape from Osama bin Laden in which he called for the release of al-Haj and others by name. Although the authenticity of the May 23, 2006, message has been questioned by some experts, it said Guantanamo detainees "have no connection whatsoever to the events of September 11 and even stranger is that many of them have no connection with al-Qaeda in the first place."

Al-Jazeera staffers also criticize the station's initially meek show of public support for al-Haj, which contrasted with the outpouring for its star reporter, Taysir Allouni, who was jailed in Spain in 2003 on terrorism charges. "The fact it took them so long to intervene harmed him immensely," said Stafford Smith, who added that he didn't want to be "too critical of Al-Jazeera because it is in a difficult position."

Was al-Haj a knowing or unwitting conspirator with terrorist groups? Or is he entirely innocent—a journalist plucked from the field while covering the world's biggest story? What crime has he committed? What is the evidence against him? Only a fair and transparent legal process can provide those answers.

"The rule of law should prevail," said colleague al-Bushra, who said he reserved final judgment on the case. "He's spent five years now without a trial." ■



Detainees are interviewed in interrogation rooms such as this one at Guantanamo. An eye bolt on the floor is used to chain detainees if needed.

Reuters/Joe Skipper

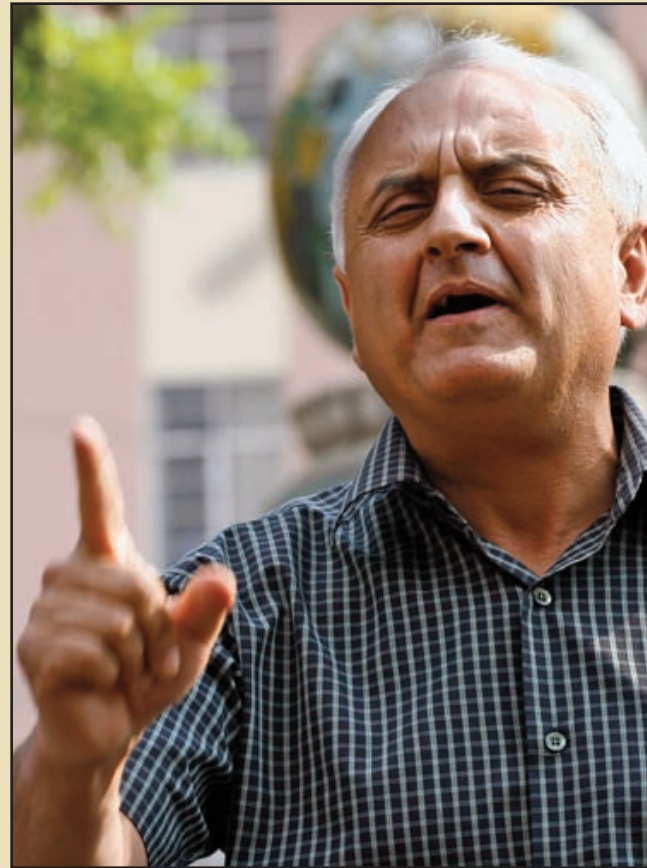
The Detainee made the following statement:

Detainee: To the Administrative Review Board: Thank you for the opportunity to address you. Obviously, I would really like to have my attorney here to help me put my case, but since this is not allowed, I must speak for myself. I am a husband and a father. I have not seen either my wife or my son for more than three years. My son was just one year and three months old when I last saw him and the idea of missing those important years of his young life saddens my soul, as I am sure you realize it would any parent. I have been told that I was found to be an enemy combatant. I do not know how this came to be and I do not know the evidence against me. With all due respect, a mistake has been made because I have never been a member of any terrorist group and I never took part in any terrorist or violent act.

Al-Haj professes his innocence during his 2005 Administrative Review Board hearing at Guantanamo, a recently declassified transcript shows.



AP/José Goltia



Reuters/Gopal Chitrakar

Words Unchained

Denied freedom, reporters and editors find that prison cells cannot restrain their writing.

By Andy McCord

Whether it lasts many years or a single day, imprisonment impels many journalists to write. Some survive the terror and tedium by recording the minutiae of daily life behind bars. Others, through deprivation and isolation, achieve important personal insight. Prison itself can be an irresistible story because, behind bars, governments often reveal themselves at their most brutal.

"A totalitarian system and a repressive system mean fear and terror. It is a society with one voice, in which only the voice of the leader is heard," the jailed Iranian writer Akbar Ganji said in a July 2005 letter to his mentor, the reformist Abdolkarim Soroush. Sent from prison while

Andy McCord is a freelance writer.

Yolanda Huergo, left, holds a snapshot of her then-jailed husband, the Cuban writer Manuel Vazquez Portal, in this 2003 photo. Huergo smuggled out of prison her husband's diaries, which detailed life behind bars.

In a jailhouse column, Nepalese editor Kanak Mani Dixit, right, asks who will defend his cellmates, young peasants swept up arbitrarily by police.

Ganji was in the midst of a hunger strike, the letter is uncompromising critique of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"Where civil society is completely crushed, and the state does not recognize a private sphere, the leader has the status of a god; and the people must be made to fear this wretched person, himself afraid and fearful of others," Ganji said in the letter, which was later printed in *The New York Review of Books*. The message was one of a number of highly charged missives that Ganji succeeded in sending from prison. In others, Ganji described Tehran's notorious Evin Prison and the use of "physical and mental torture" to extract confessions from inmates.

Other writers have looked inward, sometimes realizing that their vocation may lie beyond journalism. Faiz Ahmed Faiz, editor-in-chief of the *Pakistan Times*, is still remembered in South Asia for the poems he wrote during four years in jail from 1951 on murky conspiracy charges. During bouts of solitary confinement, where he was given only a Quran to read and was deprived of pen and paper, Faiz rediscovered his literary vocation and composed poems in his head. In one, he describes the journalist's compulsion to write:

What of it if pen and ink are snatched away?
I will dip my fingers in heart's-blood.
And if they seal my lips, then link by link
I will open the mouths of my chains.

Half a century later, Faiz appeared in a column by another imprisoned South Asian editor, Kanak Mani Dixit, editor and publisher of Nepal's *Himal Khabarpatrika* and *Himal South Asia*.

Dixit was arrested along with other prominent Kathmandu citizens in March 2005 as part of a crackdown on political protest against the king. He and other members of the capital's educated elite were thrown into a makeshift prison alongside hapless peasants who had come to Kathmandu looking for work only to be arrested as suspected Maoist rebels.

Dixit was held for only a few hours but he found in his detention, "an opportunity to take a look at the underbelly of the monster that government can be." Dixit wrote a column that he was able to send out of prison. In it, he focused on the young men who had been swept up arbitrarily, and whose path he would probably never have crossed.

"Who will tell the family, who will inform the employer, who is the lawyer or activist to speak for you?" Dixit wrote.

Imprisonment also brought insights for American expatriate Andrew Meldrum who reported from Zimbabwe for many years. In his 2004 book *Where We Have Hope: A Memoir of Zimbabwe*, Meldrum recounts how his detention in 2002 showed him a side of President Robert Mugabe's supporters. He writes that the security agents who questioned him "are as confused as anyone else about Zimbabwe's spiraling economic and political crisis. Even Mugabe's own henchmen can

sense that everything is going wrong in their country. ... 'What will bring change?' asks the younger, more curious [security agent] when the other has gone to the toilet."

"I was only in jail for 38 hours," Meldrum told CPJ, "but the experience has ... become a kind of high point in my journalism career, the point at which my work meant so much to me that I was prepared to give up my freedom." Rather than leave Zimbabwe, Meldrum stayed on to face a possible two-year sentence, saying that winning an acquittal was a way of defending his Zimbabwean colleagues as well.

"Looking back on all those events is somewhat frightening. But at the time it was not so scary," said Meldrum, who was eventually deported in a separate proceeding. "I was surprised at how unafraid I was and many other people were, too. I realized that I could survive just about anything."

British journalist Simon Winchester seemed equally unafraid during his time in an Argentine prison during the 1982 Falkland Islands war. Winchester, then a reporter for *The Sunday Times* of London, was arrested in Tierra del Fuego along with two colleagues from *The Observer* and accused of spying. They ended up waiting out the war, spending more than two months "in the prison which, as well as being the world's most southerly, must also have had one of the world's best views," as Winchester recalls in his 1983 book *Prison Diary, Argentina*. The British journalists were for the most part well-treated. They were able to listen to the BBC, receive telephone calls from their wives, and meet occasionally with a lawyer and other journalists.

Despite the good humor of Winchester's diary, the tedium and uncertainty of the experience come through vividly. Nerves wear thin and they face harsher treatment as Argentina's war losses mounted. As privileges are withdrawn, Winchester considers being less cooperative with his jailers. "Not yet," he decides, "not without the agreement of the papers, and not without a full realization that it will bring, in the short term, vengeful response from the authorities."

Cuban journalist Manuel Vázquez Portal knew as he began an 18-year sentence in 2003 that he would need to write to survive. He began a diary, recording the tiniest details of prison life, his feelings, and his deteriorating health. The diary, smuggled out of prison by his wife, Yolanda Huerga, was published by CPJ and others.

"A journalist to my core, a jail cannot muzzle me," he would later recall in a column in *Global Journalist* magazine. "The plan was simple—get information out of the prison at all cost. I started a diary of hurried notes, which I had to hide from daily cell searches. But without fear, I authorized its publication."

Vázquez Portal, who received CPJ's International Press Freedom Award while in jail in 2003, was released on medical grounds after 15 months, left Cuba, and settled in Miami, where he continues to write. So, too, does Akbar Ganji who was freed in March after six years in prison. ■



Neil Skene

Imprisoned journalist Temesken Ghebreyesus, left, is seen here shortly before being arrested in 2001. Colleague Milkias Mihreteab, right, fled the country and is a member of the exiled Eritrean press group.

Slipping from Sight

Their jailed colleagues vanishing in secret prisons, exiled Eritrean journalists seek to bring attention.

By Alexis Arieff

Khaled Abdu, once the top editor of *Admas*, a private weekly in Eritrea, fled his homeland in 2000 after getting a series of threats from government agents. He was one of the lucky ones, as it turned out. In a massive crackdown in September 2001, the government rounded up and jailed many of Eritrea's most prominent journalists and closed down all of the country's private news outlets.

The fate of those jailed journalists has become ever more precarious as this nation along the Red Sea has grown increasingly isolated. Abdu and several colleagues, believing they might be the best way to draw international attention to their imprisoned colleagues, have launched an association of journalists in exile to report on the cases.

At least 13 journalists are behind bars in Eritrea, with two more enduring prolonged forced labor euphemistically called "national service." These grim statistics have made Eritrea one of the world's five biggest jailers of journalists for five consecutive years, according to CPJ research. The imprisoned journalists have not been formally charged. Eritrean authorities have refused to discuss their whereabouts, the conditions of their imprisonment, or the precise nature of the allegations against them.

In a CPJ interview, presidential spokesman Yemane Gebremeskel denied that the journalists were imprisoned because of what they wrote, saying only that they "were involved in acts against the national interest of the state."

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He said "the substance of the case is clear to everybody" but declined to detail any supporting evidence.

"We feel like they are being forgotten," said Abdu, whose *Admas* colleague, Said Abdelkader, is among those imprisoned. "Unless we address what happened, the outside world cannot do more."

Neither the Red Cross nor family members are allowed to visit the jailed reporters, making it difficult to determine the journalists' health and, in some cases, whether they are alive. What little information can be gleaned trickles out through members of the exile community. In 2002, for example, several journalists who escaped the country alerted CPJ that nine imprisoned journalists had been moved from police cells in the capital, Asmara, to secret detention facilities after they attempted a hunger strike.

The newly inaugurated Association of Eritrean Journalists in Exile (AEJE) plans to disseminate information about the jailed journalists and other media-related issues affecting Eritrea. The association has launched a Web site, www.aeje.org, and its members stay connected through an e-mail listserv.

"We want to advocate for our colleagues who are in jail," said Aaron Berhane, a founding editor of a banned private newspaper, *Setit*, who now lives in Toronto. "We want to record their history, the work that they have done, to bring their issue to the public." Two of Berhane's former co-workers are among those behind bars, including Fesshaye "Joshua" Yohannes, a 2002 recipient of CPJ's International

Press Freedom Award. Berhane escaped prison by going into hiding, then fleeing to Sudan.

Several exiled journalists told CPJ that they struggle with a sense of survivor's guilt that they made it out of Eritrea, while others did not. They left behind not only those who were arrested, but also family members and friends who struggle with the daily hardship of living in one of the world's poorest and most repressive countries.

"Our major task is to address the human rights violations in Eritrea ... and to prepare ourselves for Eritrea to have a free and independent media," Abdu said. AEJE's two dozen members live around the world, primarily in Canada, the United States, and, like Abdu, in Sweden. They receive information from covert networks that include friendly government employees and security agents. AEJE's membership counts former journalists from private newspapers, former state media employees, and diaspora Eritreans who have become involved in media in their adopted countries.

Eritrea gained full independence from Ethiopia in 1993, after Eritrean and Ethiopian guerrilla fighters overthrew a ruthless military regime that had ruled over both territories. Journalism enjoyed a brief heyday in the ensuing years. The nation's first private newspapers were started in Asmara amid widespread optimism over the country's future. "We never dreamt of going out of Eritrea," recalled Abdu, who helped found *Admas* during that time.

While initially supportive of the revolutionary government, Eritrea's young journalists soon began to question increasingly autocratic government policies and to press for democratic reform. A backlash followed. Neil Skene, an American journalist who led U.S. State Department-backed training seminars for journalists in Asmara between 1999 and 2001, said a turning point came in 2000, when security forces briefly arrested several journalists, releasing them

with warnings to tread carefully. "You could see the demise of democracy," he told CPJ. "These guys without any history of democracy, suddenly they don't have any idea how to handle dissent."

On September 18, 2001, with world attention focused on the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Eritrean government banned the private press for allegedly threatening state security and "jeopardizing national unity." About a dozen independent journalists were rounded up by security forces, and, with the press out of business, the government canceled a general election. Hundreds of purported government opponents have since been jailed without due process.

The irony of Eritrea's bleak situation is that international media coverage has decreased as the political and humanitarian situation has worsened. While information flows more quickly and freely in much of Africa today, Eritrea has gone the other direction. It has expelled international aid organizations, United Nations-backed monitors, and a foreign journalist who worked for Reuters and the BBC.

To succeed, the AEJE must overcome fear and division that have kept many members of the diaspora from criticizing the government. Tesfaldet A. Meharenn, an Eritrean living in the United States who founded the popular Web site *Asmarino*, said it has not been easy to mobilize an outcry on human rights issues, partly because some exiled Eritreans fear that family members back home could be targeted. "The government works hard to play on that fear," he told CPJ.

Others keep quiet out of pride and a sense of solidarity. There is "a kind of shared belief on the part of many that they're a little country under siege from a hostile world, and they can never say anything that's going to make it look bad," said Dan Connell, a U.S. journalist who has written several books on Eritrea.

The AEJE's mission is made more difficult, too, by President Isaias Afewerki's legendary capriciousness and disdain for international opinion. One heartrending scenario unfolded in November 2005, when the government briefly released Dawit Isaac of *Setit*, only to re-arrest him two days later, after he phoned his wife to tell her he'd been freed. Isaac holds dual Eritrean and Swedish citizenship, and his brief release came after behind-the-scenes lobbying by the Swedish government. Some observers speculated that Isaac's re-arrest stemmed from the attention given his release.

"We should have all kept quiet," Meharenn said ruefully. Then, seeming to correct himself, he added: "See, that's what they want you to do."

The AEJE's struggle is, in many ways, a battle against hopelessness. Abdu said he understands the fear and conflicted sentiments among the exiled community. "But we must go beyond that," he said. "We have to feel like every Eritrean is our family." ■



AP/Jean-Marc Bouju

President Isaias Afewerki's administration is unwilling to disclose details about 15 journalists jailed or held against their will.

Virtual Reach of Faraway Jails

Watson sees his contributors vanish. In cyberspace, the most repressive laws trump all.

By Kristin Jones

Less than two years after a Long Island techie named Watson launched an online news site, his contributors began to vanish. The disappearances haven't stopped. Across the United States, news outlets like his are under attack. Sources and contributors to the newly founded *Freedom Newspaper* in Raleigh, N.C., have been rounded up and questioned; someone apparently hacked the editor's e-mail account to find a list of their names. In Miami, an editor remembers a day three years ago when she believed that every one of her reporters would be arrested, charged, and sentenced. It is little comfort that only a dozen of them are in prison, some serving 23-year sentences.

These news outlets—all of them online—are the targets of governments in China, the Gambia, and Cuba. These days, news crosses borders and so do attacks on the media. Governments with the worst press laws apply them to the Internet with effects that reverberate in countries with the strongest safeguards. In this decade, this has meant the imprisonment of more than three dozen journalists writing for online publications based in the United States and Europe, and several others whose Web logs were hosted in these regions.

"CubaNet has always been a target of the Cuban government," said Rosa Berre, editor of the 12-year-old Miami Web site. *CubaNet*, the Miami news site *Nueva Prensa Cubana*, and the Madrid online magazine *Encuentro en la Red* may have few readers in Cuba, where the government severely

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Watson Meng

Courtesy Watson Meng

restricts Internet access, but the sites have provided Cuban journalists with unprecedented global reach. In 2003, Cuban authorities cracked down on island journalists who used telephones, fax machines, and occasional Internet connections to send local news and commentary to Web sites in the United States and Spain. Twenty-three of the 24 journalists now jailed in Cuba were contributors to U.S. or European Web sites, according to CPJ research.

"It was terrible for us from the human point of view," said Berre, a U.S. citizen since 1993.

The Internet was once seen as a borderless realm free of government intervention, but that founding ideal of the World Wide Web has taken a beating in the past four years. More states impose restrictions on their citizens' access to the Internet and their right to post content, more are monitoring online activity, and, in some cases, nations are jailing Internet users who break local rules.

"All countries are trying to control and monitor what their citizens do online—just the focus differs," said Nart Villeneuve, a noted University of Toronto researcher who specializes in Internet censorship issues. "In some countries such as China, the focus is on political dissidents and Falun Gong. In others, it's copyright or terrorism."

Some governments try to influence others, as Russia did when it pressured Lithuania's state security to close a pro-Chechen news Web site in 2004. Vietnam, intent on censoring political speech, is trying to emulate the firewalls erected by neighboring China. Yet even the most sophisticated firewalls fail to control everything flowing through a global network.

Just ask Watson Meng, a 41-year-old former software engineer who founded *Boxun News*, a popular and sometimes controversial online forum that Internet writers in China use to air news and opinions unwelcome at home.

"*Boxun* was blocked in April or May 2000, less than two months after it was launched," said Meng, who started the Web site from his home on Long Island in New York and now runs it from North Carolina. But the timing of hits to the site indicates that most readers are in China, he said, accessing it through third-party or proxy servers that hide their identities.

When he launched the site, Meng recalled, "I did not know the words 'citizen journalists' but I did observe that many Chinese Internet users spent hours a day to publish opinions on BBS." Online bulletin board systems, or BBS, became popular forums for posting opinions in China in the late 1990s. So, Meng said, "I decided to develop a platform."

Unlike *CubaNet*, which relies on a relatively formal network of journalists in Cuba, *Boxun* draws contributors from around China through an open system of registration. The editors select pieces for their writing style and, to some extent, their ideological bent. "If a certain article tries to argue that democracy is not good, then that's nonsense and

we won't post it," Meng said. "But we try to maintain a great degree of openness. We post many opinions that the editors don't like."

Most contributors write under pseudonyms, and many take advantage of their perceived anonymity to strike hard in their criticism of the Chinese Communist Party.

Yet *Boxun's* strength, the ability to work outside a formally established system, is also a point of vulnerability. In 2002, Meng lost touch with two contributors, Wang Di and Lu Xinhua. It was not until 2004 that he received confirmation that they had been arrested, the beginning of a disturbing trend that has continued to this day. Meng's inbox is full of arrest warrants, prosecution statements, and verdicts in the cases of Huang Jinqiu, Zheng Yichun, Zhang Lin, Li Jianping, Li Yuanlong and Li Changqing—all former *Boxun* contributors now jailed, their writings for *Boxun* cited by prosecutors as proof of their crimes against the state.

About a quarter of the 32 journalists CPJ has documented as being imprisoned in China wrote for news Web sites hosted in Western Europe and the United States, some of them affiliated with the spiritual movement Falun Gong, which is banned in China.

Prison Snapshot

Here are highlights from CPJ's most recent census of imprisoned journalists, conducted on December 1, 2005:

Number of journalists jailed worldwide: **125**
Held on "antistate" charges: **62 percent**
Held on criminal defamation charges: **7 percent**
Held for reporting "false" information: **4 percent**
Held without charge: **9 percent**

Journalists whose work appeared on the Internet: **33 percent**

Number of nations jailing journalists: **24**
World's leading jailers of journalists:
China: **32**
Cuba: **24**
Eritrea: **15**
Ethiopia: **13**
Uzbekistan: **6**

For a list of all journalists jailed in 2005, including capsules on each case, go to www.cpj.org.

The actual number of jailed Internet writers may be much higher. The fact that so many of *Boxun's* contributors use proxy servers and pseudonyms means that some of them simply disappear without a trace, their fates and even their identities unknown. “We just cannot reach them anymore,” Meng said.

When Pa Nderry M’bai discovered that a list of supposed sources and contributors to his Raleigh-based Web site, *Freedom Newspaper*, had been printed in a pro-government newspaper in the Gambia, the journalist sought legal advice. Authorities in the Gambia arrested more than a dozen people on the list, including three journalists, for their association with the online newspaper, which has a reputation for criticizing Gambian President Yahya Jammeh and his ruling party.

M’bai, a Gambian who immigrated to the United States in 2004, told CPJ that he believes someone in the United Kingdom hacked into his e-mail account and supplied the list to Gambian officials. Although *Freedom Newspaper* is “a legitimate media organization operating legally in the U.S.,” M’bai said, he found little recourse in U.S. law because “the hacking was done outside the jurisdiction of the United States.” In the end, he made public appeals to international organizations including CPJ, and wrote letters to the U.S. departments of Homeland Security and State.

Global law offers scant protection to the press when national standards come in conflict. Still unclear, for example, is the question of where Internet communication takes place. Does it occur where an Internet writer is typing, where a Web site is hosted, where it is edited, where a reader views it, or in some other, undefined cyberspace?

“International law does not answer this question,” said Jonathan Zittrain, a professor of Internet governance at Oxford University and a co-founder of Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet and Society. “Each state will have its own view of when its own laws are implicated. ... And if a state can get its hands on someone, the fact that the person’s objectionable actions took place elsewhere is rarely of any moment.”

In this treacherous landscape, it is often left to individual writers and editors to make difficult decisions about whether or when to censor themselves, and how best to protect journalists working in high-risk situations.

New media that become targets are sometimes vulnerable to accusations that they are putting writers in danger. Some exiled Gambian writers believed that M’bai had failed to take adequate care with his sources and contacts, an accusation he rejects. Similarly, Hong Kong-based blogger Roland Soong has criticized *Boxun* for revising information posted by an anonymous contributor in China, whom authorities later identified as journalist Li Changqing and jailed for three years for spreading false information about dengue fever. Meng defends *Boxun's* decision to boost Li’s



Cuban writer Raul Rivero, a contributor to *CubaNet* and *Encuentro en la Red*, was jailed for 20 months.

AP/Jose Colitia

estimate of new cases of the disease, saying the revised number was based on information from other sources and was closer to the figure eventually acknowledged by the government.

Despite the risks, Meng said he believes that Chinese residents writing for overseas Web sites are safer than those who write on local Web forums. “If they post something in China, their identity can be easily tracked down,” he said. “They have to come to *Boxun* through proxies, and even we can’t see who they are.”

Meng said he advises writers to avoid posting information or photographs that might tip authorities about their identity and to ensure that at least one trusted person knows what they are doing. That way, public appeals can be made quickly if necessary.

Notably, the jailing of journalists for *CubaNet* and *Boxun* has not slowed submissions to the sites, nor has it discouraged writers from posting banned commentaries, their U.S.-based colleagues said. The editors have not considered shutting down the news sites.

“No, never,” insisted Berre, *CubaNet* editor. “We will try to maintain the independent press as long as we can.” After the 2003 crackdown, *CubaNet* stopped posting bylined reports from Cuba for almost a year as a way to safeguard its contributors. But some of the writers objected, and the editors ultimately decided that posting authors’ real names, with their permission, could raise their international profiles and provide some protection from arrest and mistreatment. A small number of the contributors jailed in 2003—including Raul Rivero and Manuel Vásquez Portal—were freed partly because of such attention.

Like other writers in Havana, Roberto Santana Rodríguez began contributing to *CubaNet* in 2004 under his own name and with knowledge of the risks he took. Though he now faces regular government harassment, he said he has no regrets. “When one decides to take this step

forward, one finds that there is no way back,” Santana wrote in an e-mail to CPJ. “There is nothing to lose and so much to gain. One has an obligation to one’s compatriots, to one’s country, and to the readers.”

Despite the resolve of writers and editors, jailing journalists is a time-tested way to silence news organizations. Readers worldwide are affected by these attacks. *Boxun* and similar Web sites are well-placed to get information out of China quickly, skirting government bans on breaking news reporting. *CubaNet*, *Nueva Prensa Cubana*, and *Encuentro en la Red* play significant roles in supplying a global audience with island news and commentary that they otherwise could not obtain.

Although some jailed Cuban writers have been freed, diplomacy has not fully caught up with journalism’s electronic shift. When Zhao Yan, a Chinese citizen and a researcher for the Beijing bureau of *The New York Times*, was detained in September 2004, U.S. officials quickly came to his defense, publicly calling on their Chinese counter-

parts to release the journalist. The imprisonment was seen as an attack on the freedom of a U.S. publication to report the news. By contrast, the jailing of contributors to *Boxun*, also U.S.-based, receives little public attention or international diplomacy. Meng believes that government and media attention in the cases of imprisoned *Boxun* writers could help win early releases and forestall the mistreatment that Li Changqing, Huang Jinqu and others have suffered in prison.

Part of the difference, Meng believes, is that he gears his news toward Chinese readers. News of imprisoned journalists appears on his news site in Chinese and doesn’t receive the same exposure as it would in an English-language publication. The fact that the publication exists in cyberspace, without an evident physical presence in the United States, is also a distinguishing factor. So is the fact that the site is a forum for citizen journalists, a concept still murky in the American public’s mind.

“We are not recognized as a mainstream news service,” Meng lamented. “I understand, *Boxun* is a new model.” ■



Reuters/Claudia Daut

Cuba’s Combinado del Este prison outside Havana has housed many of the country’s imprisoned Internet journalists.

Radio Rage

Political influence permeates radio news in Brazil's remote Northeast.

Radio hosts and independent journalism are victims.

By Carlos Lauría and Sauro González Rodríguez

FORTALEZA, Brazil

Radio reigns as the most popular news medium in the isolated, impoverished Brazilian Northeast, where on-air commentators are passionately populist and widely known figures. Many are closely tied to politically owned or controlled radio stations, which are booming in number throughout the interior, often in defiance of the law.

Oversized, outspoken, and highly partisan, these commentators have also become targets of violence. Five radio journalists have been killed in as many years in this region alone, making the Brazilian Northeast one of the deadliest areas for journalists in the Americas.

Throughout the Northeast interior, radio commentators are routinely involved in politics, campaigning for allies with ardor, attacking foes with a vengeance, and using the airwaves as a springboard for their own political aspirations. Many are “self-made” journalists; very few are considered independent. Little, it seems, is out of bounds on the air: Accusations of extramarital affairs and criminal wrongdoing are hurled without restraint or attention to fact.

Yet these commentators have also become repositories for a poor population's hopes and expectations, giving voice to their everyday concerns and directly intervening to provide assistance. That may explain why even a local stadium could not accommodate the crowds that thronged the wake of one such commentator, Nicanor Linhares Batista, who was assassinated in his recording booth in the state of Ceará in 2003. Political rivals are accused of plotting the murder in retribution for his commentary.

The slayings of journalists like Linhares—whose populist appeal runs deep but whose partisan broadsides strike nerves—prompted CPJ to dispatch a mission to the Northeastern states of Ceará and Pernambuco in August 2006.

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Mourners overflow a stadium in Limoeiro do Norte for the 2003 wake of radio commentator Nicanor Linhares Batista.



Nicanor Linhares Batista

“It’s difficult to establish the extent of the freedom that journalists exercise when radio stations are so associated with political groups,” said Marcello Gadelha, executive secretary for human rights for the state of Pernambuco. “Many journalists use [radio stations] as a political platform. It’s difficult to differentiate between journalists and politicians.”

All of Brazil can be dangerous for journalists. Reporters who work in large government and business centers such as Brasília, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro court risk whenever they report on organized crime, drug trafficking, and political corruption. But in the Northeast interior, journalism, politics, and civic affairs merge in a rare and volatile way to expose journalists to murderous attacks.

Brazil’s Northeast encompasses nine states with a population of about 50 million; the region is home to the nation’s poorest people, and distribution of wealth is said to have the sharpest inequities. Violence is common. Ceará is known as a haven for kidnappers and professional gun-

men. In both Ceará and Pernambuco, death squads composed of former and active police officers carry out vigilante justice. Citizens rely heavily on municipal governments and public entities for employment.

Leading dailies in Fortaleza, the capital of Ceará, and Recife, the government seat in Pernambuco, do not distribute in the remote parts of their states because of high costs and perceived low circulation potential. Television channels focus on regional and national news, leaving local news to others. (Large media outlets in the two capitals report significant pressure from judicial and business interests but not the same sort of political-based violence seen in the more rural interior.)

Some weeklies and other periodicals publish in mid-sized cities in the interior, but their circulation is low. Thus, the vast majority of citizens in the interior get their local news through radio.

And radio has been made a political force. In a nationwide trend that began with the return of democracy in 1985, numerous politicians have come to own or control commercial broadcast outlets, whose concessions are auctioned by the federal government. The Institute for the

Development of Journalism (PROJOR), a media ethics and press freedom organization, said last year that 51 deputies in the lower chamber of parliament, about 10 percent, were partners or directors in radio and TV stations nationwide. The institute filed a complaint with the attorney general, arguing that political ownership of broadcast outlets violates Article 54 of the Constitution, which says federal legislators cannot be affiliated “with a company that has obtained a concession for a public service.” The attorney general’s preliminary analysis found no unlawful activity.



Nonato Lima says radio hosts are compelled to praise their political patrons and attack their rivals.

Political ownership of commercial radio is strong in Ceará and Pernambuco where, by most estimates, politicians at all levels of government own or control dozens of stations.

But more troubling is the widespread political ownership of purportedly nonprofit stations. Government officials concede that some politicians have manipulated 1998 legislation that was intended to diversify broadcasting by allotting FM licenses to community associations or foundations.

By law, community stations must be owned by nonprofit entities, and they may not broadcast advertisements or political propaganda. Yet since the legislation was passed, politicians have rushed to set up “community” radio stations that are little more than mouthpieces, journalists and researchers told CPJ. Israel Bayma, a University of Brasília researcher whose work has been cited nationally, said that 87 percent of the 820 community license applicants presented to parliament for approval in 2002 were not legitimate nonprofit entities. Bayma also told CPJ that these “nonprofit” stations donated 879,000 Brazilian reais (US\$400,000) to municipal political campaigns nationwide in 2004.

Francisco Câmpora, spokesman for the Ministry of

Communications, acknowledged that the community radio law has been misused but said regulators were doing as much as they could to verify ownership. “Our ministry abides by its legal obligations,” he said. “If a radio station is used politically and it is reported ... it will be monitored and it runs the risk of being shut down, as has happened in several cases.”

Political influence permeates another category of radio—stations that operate clandestinely, without any broadcasting concession or license. According to estimates widely referenced by Brazilian media, thousands of stations operate in such a manner. CPJ research found dozens of these outlaw stations operating in Ceará and Pernambuco, many owned or controlled by politicians.

Low professional standards and the strong influence of local politicians have made for an explosive mix in other parts of the world. In the Philippines, a record-breaking 17 rural radio commentators were slain over six years beginning in 2000, a spree attributed to politically inspired, attack-oriented commentary.

In Brazil’s Northeast interior, CPJ research found, there is little objective news reporting. “Journalism in the interior is basically done by radio hosts,” said Nonato Lima, a journalism professor and radio host at Ceará Federal University. “The radio host produces, writes, investigates, does everything.”

New hosts typically obtain a certificate after taking a four-month course that includes a month of classes and three months of internship. “Their journalism is based on opinion, very partisan and political,” Lima said.

Hosts typically seek alliances from politicians who provide them with income and protection. At least some of these politicians, scions of families that have ruled the interior as political dynasties, are known to terrorize their critics. The hosts, in effect, are the hired mouthpieces. “You have to praise the owner and attack his adversary,” Lima said.

Economic considerations also play a role. Since private advertising sources are scarce, radio hosts routinely sign contracts with municipal administrations to publicize and promote their activities. While such contracts are legal, they sometimes include unlawful, under-the-table payments to secure the radio host’s allegiance. Radio hosts themselves are known to solicit such payments, journalists told CPJ.

Yet as they take on certain civic responsibilities, radio hosts end up serving functions that local governments provide with little efficiency or don’t provide at all. Speaking in plain, accessible language, commentators try to directly address people’s needs by asking listeners for donations or by calling on authorities to correct a problem. They help find

jobs for the unemployed and distribute wheelchairs for the handicapped. In time, many charismatic radio hosts become effective mediators between their audience and local authorities, turning their listeners’ gratitude into political votes for their patrons. Some radio hosts decide to enter politics outright, either on their own or at the request of politicians eager to pin their party’s fortunes on the hosts’ popularity.

Márcia Vidal Nunes, a communications professor at Ceará Federal University, has documented the rise of several Fortaleza-based radio hosts and their transformation into political candidates. Radio hosts know the needs of their audiences and “begin, little by little, placing their voices at the service of listeners, helping people who cannot exercise their rights as citizens make indirect contact through the radio with authorities who can offer a concrete solution,” she wrote in an authoritative 2000 study that followed the careers of several hosts who entered politics.

Cid Carvalho used his reputation as a crime-busting radio host as foundation to win office as a federal senator for Ceará in 1986. Carvalho, who served one term, still hosts a daily one-hour show on Fortaleza-based Radio Cidade and its sister station TV Cidade. “Radio is not dangerous,” he said. “Politics is dangerous.”

Carvalho said towns in the interior are divided by long-standing political and family disputes. Politicians, he said, feel compelled to control local radio stations to get their message out.

The climate in Pernambuco mirrors that of Ceará in many respects. “Almost all radio stations belong to political groups, and these groups confront each other through the stations,” said Aquiles Lopes, a reporter with the Recife-based daily *Diário de Pernambuco*. “This confrontation generates threats against journalists, who are usually the victims of political interests, not of their independent work.”

The slaying of radio host José Cândido de Amorim Filho in the city of Carpina illustrates the murky convergence of press and politics. Amorim, also a city councilman, had been a sharp critic of the city’s mayor, both on the air and on the council. Lopes said police have reported several lines of investigation, including journalism, politics, and campaign debts. The inquiry is still open.

Few inspired adulation and anger as did Nicanor Linhares, magnetic and controversial host of the top-rated “Encontro Político” (Political Encounter) on Rádio Vale do Jaguaribe in the city of Limoeiro do Norte in Ceará.

“Listening to Nicanor Linhares’ political program was a sacred habit for most of the people in the region,” said Dália Maia, a graduate student who grew up in the region. “People really loved him, particularly the poor. ... He would help people find housing and employment and would start campaigns to get food and medicine for them. On occasion, he would donate money and call on people to make donations.”

Linhares was unusual in that he owned his own station, but his political views were open and strident. On his show,



Dália Maia says that listening to Nicanor Linhares was a “sacred habit” in her hometown.

Linhares actively supported one mayoral campaign by fiercely criticizing rival candidate Maria Arivan de Holanda Lucena on a daily basis. Accusations of corruption were mixed with personal attacks. In turn, Linhares was assailed by two radio stations that supported Lucena; one station broadcast a “soap opera” that ridiculed Linhares’ family and a supposed extramarital affair.

The escalating invective grew deadly. In June 2003, two members of a notorious criminal gang stormed into the booth where Linhares was taping his show, shot him several times at close range, and fled on a motorcycle.

By October 2003, state prosecutors said Lucena and her husband, federal judge José Maria de Oliveira Lucena, had ordered the murder. In May 2004, at the request of federal prosecutors, a judge from the Brasília-based Superior Tribunal of Justice, the nation’s second highest court, indicted the couple. Several other suspects have been charged. The Lucenas have yet to be tried. And people still speak vividly about Nicanor Linhares’ wake.

“Nicanor based his work on both facts and opinions. He was a political journalist, he was a good person, a charitable person,” Maia said. “His wake was an event in the region. It looked like a pilgrimage.” ■

A Look Back

On the following pages, CPJ board members Michael Massing and Josh Friedman examine missions to five countries over three decades. Massing, who led the organization’s first mission, says CPJ may have learned more than it imparted. Friedman describes the importance of Washington’s leadership in advancing press freedom.



Anne Nelson, left, CPJ's mission coordinator, and Jonathan Larsen, a senior editor at *Life* magazine, at the human rights office of the Salvadoran archbishop.

The First Trip

During a 1982 mission to Central America, a delegation found turmoil within and all around.

By Michael Massing

To this day, when I think back to CPJ's first mission, to Central America in March 1982, I feel slightly queasy. It's not so much because of the turbulence we found on the ground—the state of emergency in Nicaragua, the killings of four Dutch journalists in El Salvador, the rampant activities of the death squads in Guatemala. No, it was the tension within our delegation that I most vividly recall.

At the time, Central America was the most dangerous place in the world to be a journalist, and, although CPJ was barely a year old, we felt we had to do something dramatic to publicize the risks there. I was working full-time as an editor at the *Columbia Journalism Review*, but since CPJ had but one part-time staff member it fell to me to handle the preparations. Arranging meetings and accommodations in the three countries was taxing in that era before e-mail, but

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choosing members of the delegation proved to be the real challenge. Our first recruit was Gloria Emerson, a former correspondent for *The New York Times* and author of *Winners and Losers*, a book about U.S. involvement in Vietnam; Emerson had been in frequent touch with CPJ about Central America and badly wanted to go. At her urging, we also invited Jonathan Larsen, a senior editor at *Life* magazine who had covered Vietnam for *Time*; he, too, signed on. Also agreeing to participate were Randolph Ryan, an editorial writer at *The Boston Globe*, and George Watson, a vice president of ABC News.

At five people, the delegation was already quite large, but there was a sense that we needed one more person, someone who might help us gain the ear of the U.S. government. The Reagan administration had declared Central America the prime battleground in the struggle against Soviet expansionism and, under the direction of Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, was seeking to isolate the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, prop up the government of José Napoléon Duarte Fuentes in El Salvador, and shield the

Guatemalan junta from criticism. We hoped that our mission, by highlighting the dangers that journalists in all three countries faced, could prod Washington into using its influence on their behalf. To accomplish that, though, we felt we needed to show that we weren't just a bunch of knee-jerk liberals. And so, after many phone calls and consultations, we invited Allen Weinstein to join us.

Weinstein was executive editor of *The Washington Quarterly*, published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University. Aside from a year as a member of the editorial board of *The Washington Post*, he had spent most of his career in academia. He was best known for his book *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case*, in which he had sought to prove that Alger Hiss was a Soviet spy, and which had stirred much controversy. Weinstein had close ties to the administration, and, by adding him, we hoped to get its attention. He was eager to go but insisted on bringing his wife, a Washington lawyer who spoke Spanish and whose political views were, if anything, even more stalwart. We felt we had no choice but to go along, and so she joined the delegation as an unofficial member.

The squabbling began from the moment we landed in Managua. The political divisions over U.S. policy in the region were so sharp that they kept intruding on our internal discussions. Nonetheless, we had a series of remarkable and revealing meetings. On a visit to the offices of *La Prensa*, the newspaper that had helped bring down the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle, we got a firsthand look at the arbitrariness of the prior censorship that the Sandinistas had imposed on the press. We arrived as that day's edition was being prepared, and the editor, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro Jr.—son of the legendary publisher who had been assassinated by Somoza's thugs in 1978—informed us that the editorial page had already been sent to the government three times for inspection. The censors ended up banning an article analyzing the mistrust between the superpowers, a photo of children playing in the charred remains of a bus destroyed by guerrillas in El Salvador, and a letter to the editor about protecting the country's wildlife. Across town, in the offices of *Barricada*, the official organ of the Sandinista Front, Pedro's brother, Carlos Fernando Chamorro, defended the government's clampdown on the paper that his family had so long owned, arguing that it used language that lent legitimacy to counterrevolutionary groups. Thus had the revolution split Nicaragua's leading journalistic family.

We arrived in El Salvador on the eve of a national election that the Reagan administration was touting as an important step on the road to democracy, and more than 700 journalists had come to cover it. I have a vivid memory of Tom Brokaw broadcasting from outside a polling place in San Salvador. Yet the working conditions for journalists—both local and international—remained precarious. Twenty-two journalists (not including the four Dutchmen) had been killed in circumstances other than combat, and many more had been

wounded, threatened, or assaulted. Everywhere journalists went, they were greeted by chants of *Di la verdad*—tell the truth. Shortly before our arrival, the right-wing Arena party had broadcast a campaign ad criticizing *New York Times* reporter Warren Hoge by name. (In a meeting in his room at the Camino Real Hotel, Hoge expressed unconcern.) We met with two of the men thought to be most responsible for the attacks on journalists—Arena leader Roberto d'Aubuisson, who was widely believed to be linked to the death squads, and Gen. José Guillermo García, the director of the national police. Both promised that after the election they would issue statements calling for the rights of journalists to be respected. (Neither did.) The depth of the animosity toward the press became clear to us at a tense meeting with the country's leading business group. One wealthy industrialist denounced *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* for the harm they had done El Salvador's image. We pointed out that it was not journalists who had caused the deaths of tens of thousands of Salvadorans. Over cocktails at the residence of U.S. Ambassador Deane Hinton, we shared our concerns about the dangers journalists faced. He cavalierly brushed them aside. The Salvadoran press was "incredibly free," he declared. As for the dead Dutchmen, he said gruffly, "War correspondents run risks. They ran a risk. It's a rough country."



In El Salvador, Arena leader Roberto d'Aubuisson and police head Gen. José Guillermo García promised to publicly support the rights of journalists. Neither did.

While we were in El Salvador, we learned that the government of Fernando Romeo Lucas García in Guatemala had been overthrown in a coup. But the capital, Guatemala City, seemed calm, so we continued there. The coup had brought to power another general, Efraín Ríos Montt, but the regime he replaced had been so savage that journalists were allowing themselves a moment of optimism. At the offices of *Diario El Gráfico*, one of the country's two main papers, a top editor told us how under Lucas García he had feared attack from both right-wing death squads and leftist guerrillas. "We were the ham of the sandwich," he said. With a new government in place, he was feeling somewhat more relaxed. For the first time in four years, the paper's editor was signing his name to editorials. He ended the meeting on a note of

caution, however. “We still don’t really know what’s going to happen,” he said and asked that we not use his name. The publisher at another paper, *Prensa Libre*, was more blunt. “This is war,” he said, noting that his editor had recently been kidnapped by guerrillas and was still missing.

The haggling within our delegation followed us home as we sought to hammer out a statement that all could live with. Don’t ask me how, but Weinstein ended up drafting the Nicaragua and El Salvador sections. (He left the delegation before it got to Guatemala.) The statement on Nicaragua contained political commentary that seemed to me extraneous to the press situation there, and I said so at the press conference we held. Some 75 journalists attended the event, and our statement was written up in *The New York Times* and other publications.

Did it have any effect? I don’t think so. Conditions for the press worsened in all three countries. The investigation into the deaths of the Dutch journalists stalled. (Soon after we issued our statement, I got a call from I.F. Stone angrily upbraiding us for not digging deeper into the case.) *La Prensa* continued to publish throughout the Contra war but

was largely defanged. In Guatemala, Rios Montt proved even more brutal than his predecessor, and the editor of *Diario El Gráfico* with whom we’d talked, and who had asked that his name not be used, was murdered several years later. Throughout, the Reagan administration confined its concerns over press freedom to Nicaragua.

For CPJ, however, the mission was invaluable, for it imparted some important lessons. One was to keep delegations small. The larger the group, the more unwieldy it becomes. We also learned to avoid selecting participants according to some ideological standard. The key is to pick accomplished journalists with an uncompromising commitment to the cause of press freedom. Finally, in designing missions, we found that it helps to keep the scope limited. Visiting three war-fractured countries in 10 days was wildly unrealistic.

Fortified by these lessons, CPJ today conducts more than a dozen missions a year, pulling them off with great aplomb. For me, however, the memories of that first mission linger, and while I’ve been on several trips since, I’ve gone mostly solo. As for Allen Weinstein, today he’s the director of the National Archives. ■

A Matter of Commitment

Missions to Ethiopia and Eritrea tested CPJ and showed the importance of Washington’s leadership.

By Josh Friedman

Ethiopia and Eritrea are on the frontier of the struggle for press freedom. Isolated in high mountains, the two countries test the limits of CPJ’s ability to aid endangered journalists. In four missions since 1996 (three to Ethiopia and one to Eritrea), we have had mixed success—owing more to the changing attitudes of officials in Washington than to leaders in the strategically crucial Horn of Africa.

What are we dealing with? Journalists in these two countries face obstacles those of us in free countries can only imagine. In Ethiopia, joking about the prime minister sent a cartoonist to jail for years. In Eritrea, an editorial urging good government led to the mass roundup and continued disappearance of virtually every independent journalist in the country.

Ethiopia has a long history of jailing journalists, and since 2001 Eritrea has had more than a dozen journalists imprisoned in secret locations without charge. As of 2005, Ethiopia and Eritrea lagged only China and Cuba as the world’s top jailers of journalists.

So when CPJ asked me to participate in missions to these two remote countries I jumped at the chance. I had gotten to know them as a newspaper reporter in the mid-1980s when they were one country under a murderous Soviet-backed dictatorship called the Derg, headed by Mengistu Haile Mariam. A free press did not exist. Now, in 1996, on the first of two CPJ missions I accompanied, I would have a chance to see how the press had developed after the Derg fell in 1991.

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In a word, it was heartrending. In both countries, eager, optimistic, and mostly inexperienced young people—and die-hards from the previous regime—had become instant journalists. In Ethiopia, nearly 100 publications, mostly one- or two-person affairs, poured forth a mixture of real news, rumor, accidentally fake news, deliberately fake news, and ad hominem attacks on the country’s new leaders.

The hard-bitten guerrilla leaders who had taken over Ethiopia—and then Eritrea when it seceded—recoiled in horror at the exuberant free press. After all, these were doctrinaire Marxists who had spent decades fighting from cave hideouts where they had enforced discipline through self-criticism sessions and strict adherence to ideology. Determined to maximize pressure on the press despite having signed human rights accords to please Western donors, the new leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea found more subtle ways to intimidate the media.

In Ethiopia, for example, editors routinely have multiple criminal charges pending under a repressive 1992 press law, ensuring that they can easily be sent to jail. Authorities also use under-the-radar techniques such as putting pressure on printers.

So what could a CPJ mission do to confront this? On the ground we could gather facts to inform the world what was happening, buck up endangered journalists, comfort the families of the jailed or missing, rally the small network of diplomats committed to a free press—and plead with and cajole the countries’ new leaders to be patient with an embryonic press.

This last was the hardest. For millennia, because of their isolation on high mountain plateaus, Ethiopia and Eritrea had developed a culture of distrusting outsiders, whom they called ferengi. Foreign invaders had come and gone—often meting out cruelty. One of my best sources in Ethiopia, scion of a long-deposed aristocratic family, was



Sandinista soldiers cross a stream during a confrontation with Contras in Las Pinuelas, Nicaragua. Throughout the 1980s, the United States expressed concern over press freedom in strife-ridden Nicaragua but not in other Central American countries.



After arriving in Addis Ababa in 1996, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher skips an official press conference to protest treatment of Ethiopian journalists. CPJ has persistently lobbied Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi for better press conditions.

fond of showing off a photograph of grinning Italian soldiers playfully dangling the severed head of his grandfather, who had led an army trying to block the 1935 invasion. So when we met with Ethiopia's leaders, they engaged us—smiling, debating, appearing to listen, just as they have for centuries with naive Westerners seeking to influence them. In Eritrea, now approaching the secretiveness and paranoia of North Korea, they merely ignored us and had their underlings shadow and threaten us.

But there was one more thing we could do—probably the most important. We could try to get the U.S. government to hold Ethiopia and Eritrea to the press freedoms they had promised. Here we had some success. But there has been a striking difference between the response of the Clinton and current Bush administrations.

Some background is necessary to understand this. The Horn of Africa is of strategic importance to the United States, as a listening post and military jumping-off point. Christian and Muslim, Eritrea and Ethiopia are surrounded by countries key to the struggle against militant Islam—on the west and to the north by Sudan and Egypt; on the east by Somalia, and across the Red Sea by Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

On my first mission in 1996, with then-CPJ Africa program coordinator Kakuna Karina, we arrived in Addis Ababa just a few weeks after a visit by President Clinton's CIA director John Deutsch. On my second mission in 2002, with then-CPJ Africa coordinator Yves Sorokobi and Washington

representative Frank Smyth, we arrived in Asmara, capital of Eritrea, just a few months before President Bush's defense secretary, Donald Rumsfeld.

By coincidence, we released our 1996 report as Clinton Secretary of State Warren Christopher was literally in the air on his way to a tour of five African countries. Seizing the moment at the Washington press conference announcing the report, I urged Christopher to stand up for a free press in Ethiopia. Damned if he didn't. On arrival in Addis Ababa, he shunned the official airport press conference because independent journalists were barred, invited them to his hotel room, and publicly urged Ethiopia to protect journalists. His spokesman said it was the CPJ report that had moved him to this. Four years later, still having to deal with the Clinton adminis-

tration, Ethiopia eased up on jailing journalists. I like to think we contributed to that.

By contrast, a few months after our visit to Eritrea and subsequent demand for the release of journalists who had disappeared into shadowy detention centers, Donald Rumsfeld was in Asmara. On departure at the airport, he answered press questions. What did he think about disappeared journalists and diplomats, he was asked. It's an internal affair that should be left to Eritrea's leaders, he said, flying off to pursue the war on terror. The U.S. Defense Department later sent a letter to CPJ saying that Rumsfeld had discussed human rights abuses with Eritrean officials and had communicated that such abuses could hamper defense cooperation.

The lesson? Obviously, we have to redouble our efforts—as we did in March this year in a very thorough mission to Ethiopia by CPJ Africa coordinator Julia Crawford, board member Charlayne Hunter-Gault, and Charles Onyango-Obbo of Kenya's Nation Media Group. That delegation secured meetings with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and the justice minister, which resulted in improvements in the conditions of some imprisoned journalists.

But the larger lesson of CPJ's campaign for press freedom in the Horn of Africa is this: We need a commitment to a free press at the highest reaches of government in Washington. Without that, leaders of other countries pondering the treatment of journalists know they can literally get away with murder. ■

The Drive to Go Live

Technology may improve news gathering but not the quality of reporting.

By Dave Marash



News crews go live at a courthouse in Red Lake, Minn., after a shooting spree last year.



Dave Marash on assignment.

Al Jazeera International

In the news media, it's the message, the content, that counts. And somebody please tell Marshall McLuhan's disciples that every news professional knows how to use the medium to transmit any message. But shorter messages make for simpler, less complete stories. And the pressure for shorter, simpler stories turned around in less time frequently makes for oversimplification, stereotyping, factual or conceptual mistakes, and a misinformed audience.

Here's how fast motion can yield confusion. Western journalists parachuted into Bosnia in 1992, largely ignorant of the country's history and culture, and had no time to refute Serb fascist leader Radovan Karadzic's mischaracterization of the conflict in his country as an endless war among three ethnic groups "as different as dogs and cats." This widely accepted "problem from hell," as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher called it, gave no moral weight to any of the three allegedly incompatible species, and allowed the Clinton administration to stand aside while Karadzic's anti-Muslim policy prevailed.

The more complicated truth is that all three contending parties coexisted civilly through 90 percent of their history, unless they were stirred one against the others by outside agitators like the Ottoman or Hapsburg empires. The Bosnian war was fought between ethnic nationalists, mostly of Serb and Croat backgrounds, and the majority of Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims who wanted a civil, open, democratic society. Had the Western news media sized up the contending forces correctly and spelled out the real complexities of Bosnia in a little more detail, President Clinton might have been forced to intervene on behalf of the democrats years earlier than he did.

Similarly, the simplifying shorthand of "civil war" in Iraq has obscured the remarkable lack of neighborhood-on-neighborhood violence that is the real hallmark of sectarian conflict. That's the sort of thing you have to work hard to prevent in Kosovo or Nigeria. What's happening in Iraq is a feudal war of private armies, mostly party militias, some based on sectarian identity, but most based on private mafia interests. When fighters from, say, the Badr Brigade of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq exchange lethalties with Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, as frequently happens, it is Shiite-on-Shiite violence. The deaths have nothing to do with irreconcilable religious conflicts; they have to do with the failure of coalition forces, mostly American, to bring either law or order to Iraq. But blaming age-old conflicting sects takes less time or thought than confronting the costs of occupation.

The dominance of shorter stories has also affected staffing and assignments. Investigative reports are—by legal necessity as well as by definition—long, complex, and full of important details. If there's no time to run such stories, there's no need for investigative reporters, which means not only fewer groundbreaking projects, but no one

on staff with the ability to fact-check complicated government assertions, such as the safety of the post-9/11 environment at ground zero in New York, or the existence of WMD in Iraq. Although the U.S. networks continue to support investigative units, the decline of original and long-form reporting in local TV and newspapers is a sad hallmark of this quarter-century. Investigative journalism is definitely one of the things speed kills.

The fastest thing in the news is the live shot. And, when news is happening, covering it live is an unmatched opportunity. Among my play-by-play news reports: the attempted murder of mob chieftain Joe Colombo; the siege of Building 21 at the Munich Olympic Games; Hurricane Andrew; and a volcanic eruption on the island of Montserrat. Not only are the events electric, but the immediacy of witness enhances the charge. And sometimes, you are lucky enough to be there. There are many good reasons for the news to "go live."

But, again, in line with that deep faith in the inherent qualities of "the medium," today's news channels waste a lot of time "going live" for reports on events long past "live"—or worse, "getting the latest, live" on events such as undeveloped hurricanes that may never be live at all. Apparently, news managers believe "live" is the message—of excitement, of audience attraction, and audience retention. No matter the reality.

The real shaper of media and messages is time. Even the expansive horizons of 24/7 shrink as more of each hour and day is eaten up by meaningless live reports. Oh, and by the way, the reporter, the poor soul tethered to the live shot camera location, is thereby prevented from doing any eyes-on reporting. This doesn't matter if what your boss is really looking for is a reification of this morning's newspaper reports tonight—that the conflict between the Reds and the Blues over fish or fandangos is getting better or worse—in under two minutes. But if you want to be able to tell people exactly why today is different from yesterday for the people of X-istan, the burden of repeated live shots is a deathblow.

And speaking of deathblows, let's get to the biggest, most definitive world changer for journalists in the last 25 years: the Internet. Typically, I'll leave aside the competitive question, whether news from computers is going to economically kill off news from radios, televisions, or newspapers. That's just a matter of which media will get to carry news messages.

What the Internet has done to news is, first, massively expand journalists' sources of information. More information about more subjects is more easily accessed today

Changing Landscape | Technology

than ever before. But this data deluge brings with it a multiplying cascade of questions of verification. "Where did that fact come from?" And, "How does *he* know?"

It is part of the natural growth of human curiosity that every day there are more things we don't know, but it is the human manipulation of facts and assertions over the Internet that has multiplied the number of absolutely untrue things that millions of people think they "know."

The Internet adds not only to the burdens of fact-gathering and fact-checking, it throws every journalist into a new public arena of compliment and contention, both of which can be stimulating or annoying, but which always displace time from writing, reporting, researching, or just thinking.



Reporters provide the obligatory stand-up while covering the JonBenet Ramsey case outside a Boulder, Colo., courthouse.

Not just facts, but beliefs are in free trade on the Internet, and this is how it has become literally life-threatening to journalists. Twenty-five years ago, our role as conduits was crucial. If you had a fact, an idea, or a system of belief you wanted to communicate to a large audience, you needed the media. In the Balkans in the '90s, partisans of all sides wanted to "tell the world" their view of the post-Yugoslavia wars, and they wanted journalists around to witness and tell it. They actually had a stake in our survival. How quaint!

Today's terrorists, true believers, or political activists can put their messages directly before a global audience through their Web sites. The news media conduit, while sometimes useful, is no longer necessary. Neither is the survival of the scribe. It may be easier to get to a story today, but as I was once reminded by an offended Caribbean dictator, "It can be very hard to go home." ■

Today's terrorists, true believers, or political activists can put their messages directly before a global audience through their Web sites.

Faster, faster, faster.

The first thing to say about news gathering and dissemination is that everything's gotten faster. Now, a reporter based in New York or Washington can get to a story almost anywhere on the globe faster than 25 years ago thanks to better air connections.

Working for "Nightline," an ABC charter had me on the still-shaking ground of southern California about six hours after the Northridge earthquake of 1994; a commercial trans-Pacific flight had me in Sri Lanka only 36 hours after the tsunami of December 2004. At both locations, I found manned camera positions already in place for live reports back to "Nightline."

Think about today's journalistic possibilities: All the world can learn the news from anywhere on the planet more or less instantly. And indications are that all the world wants to know. News channels are thriving across the English-speaking world, and in French, German, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, Arabic, Urdu, and Hindi just to name a few large language groups. The news on most of these channels, like the news on the major U.S. television news outlets, is also getting faster.

The U.S. networks at least have the excuse that they are trying to cover the world in 21 program minutes. But the cable networks—CNN, MSNBC, Fox News Channel, and their colleagues abroad—stay open Jersey diner hours, 24/7. What's their rush?

To put it in its most high-minded form, most American television news executives make the McLuhan mistake: They think the medium is the message. If that's what you believe, the record for visual media is clear: faster, faster, faster. If you graphed the history of motion pictures and television by editing cuts per minute, you would get a sharply rising line over the past 100 years. And not only do news pieces today move at a far faster pace of cuts per minute, they tend to be shorter.

Shorter stories, slotted into shorter news blocks, allowing more time per half hour for commercials are all essential parts of the changing news picture over the past 25 years.

Dave Marash, one of the founding members of CPJ, is former correspondent for ABC's "Nightline" and now anchor for the satellite news channel Al-Jazeera International.

Sowing Seeds

After a flood of media development money, a more limited vision emerges.

By Ann Cooper



Reuters/David Brauchli

Few developments shook the world of journalism and press freedom as profoundly in the past quarter century as the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Beginning in the late 1980s, as communist regimes fell, some of the world's most information-deprived societies suddenly were opened to floods of news and reassessments of history. Citizens long reliant on the censorship-busting broadcasts of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty now had many new options for learning the news.

Those options multiplied throughout the 1990s as Western governments, eager to see democracy engulf formerly totalitarian states, poured money into basic training for armies of new, independent-minded journalists. The investors believed these local journalists, infused with Western ideals, would be future guarantors of such democratic tenets as competitive elections and government accountability.

"There was a gold rush," said Anne Nelson, a former executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists, who recalled an initial frenzy of well-meaning but sometimes misguided training programs. Culture gaps were common in the Westerners' lessons. One group of American trainers went to Prague, said Nelson, "talking about sunshine laws, though the Czechs had never even read a real newspaper." In the United States, state sunshine laws give journalists broad access to government information.

Billions of dollars and thousands of training programs later, the world of independent media development has evolved and expanded. Training programs are better focused, longer term, and often locally run. They have emphasized ethics and investigative reporting, creating stronger and more critical journalism in many post-communist states, and increasingly in countries such as Kosovo and Afghanistan.

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As the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, opportunities and money to develop news media seemed nearly limitless. Reality set many limits.

They have also produced a new generation of international journalists whose work has helped overthrow repressive regimes in Yugoslavia, Georgia, and Ukraine. But elsewhere, journalists trained to question and criticize post-totalitarian governments find themselves increasingly repressed—by new governments that turned out to be only nominally committed to democracy and a free press.

In Uzbekistan, for example, where several media training organizations worked for more than a decade to foster a small but scrappy corps of independent journalists, the regime of President Islam Karimov virtually demolished their efforts after media exposed a 2005 government massacre of civilians in the Uzbek city of Andijan. The Karimov government sent a few journalists to prison, intimidated others into exile, and took their media trainers to court before expelling them from the country.

"When you continue to provide training in the repressive countries where nothing gets better, but only worse, the question is what are you teaching for?" asked Uzbek journalist Galima Bukharbaeva, one of dozens forced into exile for her tough-minded reporting. Bukharbaeva praised the training techniques of U.S.-based Internews and other Western organizations that have worked with her and her Uzbek colleagues. But without safeguards for press freedom, she said, such training efforts can appear futile.

"You spend so much money, but where will journalists work afterward?" asked Bukharbaeva. "Do they have any tribune to work?"

In Uzbekistan, the answer is no; there are no longer any outlets for independent journalists, and those who once trained them are banned from the country. Citizens who want more than the Karimov regime's state propaganda now must seek news from shortwave foreign services such as RFE/RL—just as they did under Soviet communism.

One lesson from Uzbekistan, said Eric Newton, director of journalism initiatives for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is this: "Nation-building, and democracy, and press freedom, and press responsibility are all long-term projects, like forests. Unfortunately, also like forests, they can be burned down in a few days."

Sobering experiences such as Uzbekistan have prompted Knight and other private and government funders to reassess how they spend the roughly \$1 billion a year invested in international media development. Their programs range from teaching basic reporting to building local business models that can assure financial independence for privately owned media.

The emphasis on business training reflects a new practicality in media development. But it still offers no guarantees of the press freedom that many once believed was almost inevitable once Soviet totalitarianism ended.



AP/Internews

A correspondent for "Salaam Watandar," a radio program developed by Internews, reports from a campaign rally in Afghanistan. Successes are reported in places such as Kosovo and Afghanistan.

"I think we were very naïve. I don't think we really understood how to build enduring democracies," said David Hoffman, president of Internews, a U.S.-based non-profit that was one of the first to provide media training in the former Soviet Union.

Hoffman said that after an initial period of freedom, new post-communist governments staged a "counterrevolution" to rein in the press and silence their critics. "Governments don't like to have real opposition," he said. "And they realized that to get elected, control over media is very, very important."

Perhaps no post-communist state inspired more press freedom euphoria—and disappointment—than Russia. In the communist era, Russia and the 14 other Soviet republics were awash in print and broadcast media, all under the iron control of the Communist Party. When it came to silencing dissent, "their monopoly on media was probably as important as their military control," Hoffman said.

The press was so faithful to the party line that CPJ, founded a decade before the Soviet collapse, recorded few Soviet-era attacks on media, other than government jamming of RFE/RL broadcasts.

By 1990, the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, had eased restrictions on expression and on private enterprise, which began to finance new, non-party media outlets. Along with the investments of Russian businessmen, Western donor support promoted private media that aggressively investigated issues such as government corruption and organized crime.

The repercussions of these huge changes were described by CPJ Europe program coordinator Catherine Fitzpatrick in the 1996 edition of *Attacks on the Press*: "The effects of this growing press freedom on working journalists' safety are often paradoxical."

As Russian media pushed the limits of their new freedom, noted Fitzpatrick, they increasingly suffered attacks by those whose wrongdoing they exposed. CPJ's efforts in the region had to expand, she wrote, in order to support the "many more emboldened and better trained journalists in their 20s, who were teenagers during the revolution."

Ultimately, the age of freedom "didn't last long, and it didn't take very much effort by [President Vladimir] Putin's government to squelch all of this," said Russian journalist Masha Lipman, one of the world's most respected Kremlin watchers. New controls instituted after Putin came to power

in 2000 caused little outcry, Lipman said, in part because of growing public cynicism about democratic values.

Still, Lipman noted that even with the Putin government's restrictions, today's Russian media are significantly more informative than their Soviet predecessors, and "pockets and islands" of truly independent journalism continue to function, particularly outside of major cities.

"Pockets and islands" of press freedom may seem a dismal result 15 years after the Soviet collapse. But many media development experts have learned to scale back their expectations. They describe their work as "sowing seeds" that may, or may not, blossom into strong, sustainable independent media.

"It is never going to happen with a whoosh," says Drusilla Menaker, senior media adviser for the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), a U.S. government-funded organization that provides support to independent media. "You nurture editors, create here and there what I call 'constituencies' for media independence, you give reporters new skills, you generate discussion about skills and standards among journalists, you work on the regulatory environment by critiquing laws," Menaker said. "The

point has to be to build local desire to move forward."

The emphasis on local initiative was another hard-learned lesson for media developers. "Funders come in and say, 'OK, we must create media,' and they spend a lot of money, and in some instances, have done more harm than good," said Lin Neumann, a former CPJ program coordinator for Asia.

Neumann, who has also conducted media training programs in several Asian countries, cited money invested in East Timor's media development in 1999 as a loss because there was "no appreciable infrastructure of any kind" to support it. Media development funding in Indonesia after the 1998 resignation of President Suharto was far more effective, said Neumann, because "they put money into something that was really an expression of what indigent Indonesian journalists wanted to do."

Even when training efforts fail to establish strong new media, they can have a powerful impact on individual reporters and editors. "Journalists have a much greater sense of their rights and responsibilities because they've been to so darn many of these seminars," Neumann said. "They come in contact with new concepts, and it means a lot to them." ■

Ambition Falls Short

Fifteen years after launching what became a multibillion-dollar effort to promote independent media in formerly totalitarian regimes, Western donors have learned some crucial lessons. Among them: Be sensitive to local realities; train media owners in how to achieve financial stability; promote legal reforms that can strengthen press freedom; and be prepared for long-term investment.

Despite its own wealth of experience in media development, the U.S. government ignored those lessons when it decided in 2003 to invest \$200 million to build new media in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq, according to journalists and media development experts.

The American project, initially called Iraqi Media Network (IMN), was hugely ambitious. The goal was to create two television channels, two radio stations, and a national newspaper. The first company chosen to fulfill that goal was a defense contractor with no media experience. The result, according to U.S. press accounts about IMN's first months of operation, was a TV channel widely viewed by the Iraqi public as little more than a propaganda arm for the U.S.-led coalition ruling post-Saddam Iraq.

"Run by the Pentagon, it was a near total failure in its

first year, with Iraqi journalists, American trainers, and U.S. government officials assailing it as wasteful, amateurish, and counterproductive," wrote journalist David Rohde in a paper published last year by the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy.

According to Rohde, IMN was the largest media development project ever attempted by U.S. or other Western governments. By comparison the U.S. Agency for International Development said in 2003 that its biggest media assistance target, Russia, had received \$44 million over the previous decade—less than a quarter of what was earmarked for the IMN program.

USAID, a State Department agency, oversees most American spending on media development. Its programs are aimed at promoting democracy and press freedom in post-communist and post-conflict states. But the IMN program was run by the Pentagon, not the State Department.

As a result, when the Pentagon sought a new contractor after the initial controversy in 2003, prominent media development organizations did not come forward to bid.

"It was under the Defense Department at that point," said David Hoffman, president of U.S.-based Internews. "So we didn't feel it had any real independence, and there were security issues." IMN's television station, Al-Iraqiya, remains on the air and now operates largely as the Iraqi government's state channel, according to journalists.



Jonathan Thompson, a former member of IMN's board of directors and now deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, said the fruits of the effort are still to come.

"Anyone who says it's a failure, I would say they haven't seen the inner workings," said Thompson, who calls it "too soon to tell" whether Al-Iraqiya will grow into a more independent source of news for the Iraqi public.

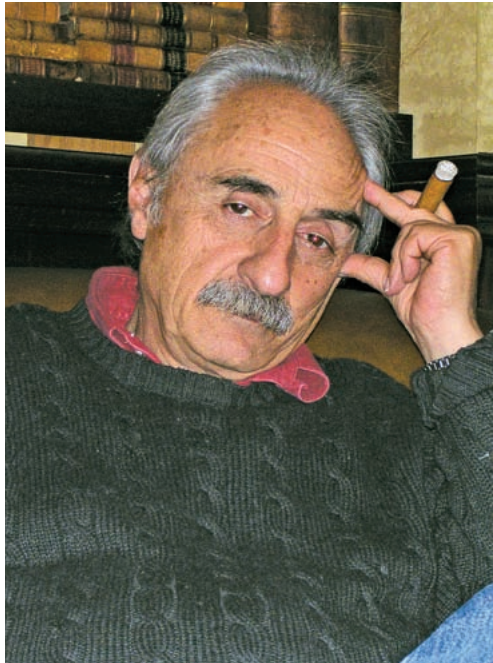
Foundations and other funders typically support independent media projects in countries that have moved from conflict to rebuilding. Iraq's violence continues, claiming the lives of more than 100 media employees, many of them local journalists deliberately targeted by insurgents.

"A free press will not flourish in Iraq until the country is more secure," concluded Rohde in his Shorenstein Center paper. He urged the United States to postpone efforts to create new media outlets in Iraq and instead focus on increasing security for those that already exist.

"Supporting, respecting, and most of all, securing local journalists," Rohde said, "may be the most critical way the United States can foster the creation of a vibrant free press." ■

—Ann Cooper

A U.S. soldier guards an Iraqi Media Network transmission tower in October 2003. The network, run by the Pentagon, was considered by many to be a U.S. propaganda arm when it launched.



Alfredo Molano feared he was losing his connection to his native Colombia. Threatened with death, he had spent five years in exile.

Gloria Jaramillo

Returning Home

A Colombian columnist returns after years in exile, but he is one of the few.

By Elisabeth Witchel

Two years ago, Alfredo Molano made one of the most difficult decisions of his life—to return to his home and job.

A veteran columnist for Colombia's *El Espectador* newspaper who spent five years in exile in Spain and the United States, Molano put his life at risk when he went back home. A series of death threats from a notorious Colombian paramilitary leader had forced him to leave his family and his professional life in 1999. Colombian journalists know that threats from paramilitary groups must be taken seriously—such groups are believed responsible for the murders of at least 11 of their colleagues over the last 15 years.

But in a new interview with CPJ, Molano said that he “could not conceive of building a life outside my own country on a permanent basis.” A father of five, several of whom are now grown, Molano said he suffered enormously while away from his tight-knit family. “That which hit me most was always the separation.”

Nearly as hard as being away from family, he said, was the feeling that he was losing touch with Colombia. He kept his weekly column while in exile, maintained contact with journalists and scholars, and followed Colombian news

Elisabeth Witchel is CPJ's journalist assistance coordinator. She wrote about Zimbabwe's exiled journalists in the fall 2005 edition of *Dangerous Assignments*. **Maria Barrera Balarezo** contributed to this story.

Journalists in exile are rarely able to continue in their professions. Many end up sacrificing their careers.

closely. Nevertheless, he said, “the feeling that I could not fully capture the ambiance of Colombia in my writings haunted me continuously.” So he took the chance.

Many journalists have been forced to flee their homes, but Molano is among a small number who have chosen to return. In the last five years alone, CPJ's emergency assistance program has helped 126 journalists under threat of violence or imprisonment leave their countries. Of those, fewer than 17 percent have returned home while more than 40 percent have permanently resettled in North America and Western Europe. At least two dozen still live as refugees, hoping to be accepted into permanent resettlement programs. Others stay for a time in the sort of limbo in which Molano remained for five years, hoping for a time when it is safe to return.

Like Molano, many journalists go abroad expecting to take short-term refuge until conditions improve in their country. Yet in nations such as Colombia, Sri Lanka, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where journalists are targeted amid civil strife, hot zones don't cool down quickly and a temporary escape often turns into long-term exile. In several cases CPJ has documented, journalists have ventured back only to leave again as threats resume.

Other journalists who have fled imminent arrest by authoritarian regimes in Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, and Ethiopia have waited in vain for a change of government. In some cases flight becomes a liability in itself: Rwandans who leave the country are typically branded “genocidaires” by the government.

Journalists in exile are rarely able to continue in their professions; to penetrate competitive media job markets abroad, they must secure work permits, prove their qualifications anew, and overcome real or perceived language barriers. “Even in Spain,” Molano said, “the subtle idiomatic differences could make the situation difficult for someone in exile.”

Many end up sacrificing their careers because a safer lifestyle in exile offers a better future for their children. Some end up earning higher wages in service jobs than they did in their journalism jobs back home. Most full-time Colombian journalists, for example, earn less than \$350 a month.

Eventually, Molano exhausted his professional options overseas and was faced with the stark choice of applying for political asylum in the United States or returning to Colombia—where colleagues repeatedly warned him it was not safe.

One of the country's most respected journalists and authors, Molano had angered the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), a right-wing organization known for violence against detractors. After a July 1998 piece com-

paring the AUC to another notoriously violent group, Molano received a series of threatening letters from AUC leader Carlos Castaño. By December of that year, Castaño was faxing *El Espectador's* editor and calling Molano an enemy of the nation.

Molano says he lived with the threats until armed men were spotted near his home, and his family pleaded, “You must go. They are going to kill you.”

In early 1999, Molano went to Spain for what he hoped would be a short period as part of a refuge program for human rights defenders. Later that year, the murder of Jaime Garzón, a popular television host gunned down after receiving threats from Castaño, convinced Molano he could not return to Colombia anytime soon. He came to the United States as a senior research fellow at Stanford University, and later spent three semesters as a visiting professor in the university's Latin American Studies Department.

Academic opportunities are successful if they can provide journalists with temporary financial security, a professional outlet, and a safe haven—while enabling them to eventually return to their home and jobs. “It's an imperfect art,” said James Bettinger, director of the John S. Knight Fellowships for Professional Journalists at Stanford, who has worked with exiled journalists. Foremost, he said, academic opportunities can help “outstanding journalists live to report and photograph another day.”

Daniel Coronel, an exiled Colombian journalist who came to Stanford in fall 2005, described his 4-year-old daughter's delight upon their arrival at the Northern California campus. After spending her life in an armored car, she learned that car windows can open. “My daughter for the first time can have a normal life. She can move in safety,” Coronel said. “It is amazing to see her bike.”

But fellowships and similar opportunities are not plentiful, they are short-term, and, while offering a soft landing in exile, they cannot make easy a return to hostile conditions.

In Molano's case, the support has helped. Since returning to Colombia, he has reasserted his role as a tough, left-wing government critic, writing a column and features for the weekly *El Espectador* and other news outlets. He has published two books that he first developed in exile, *Loyal Soldiers in the Cocaine Kingdom* and *The Dispossessed: Chronicles of the Desterrados of Colombia*. Known for his scholarship in sociology, Molano consults and teaches as well.

Though his writing still generates angry responses, Molano has not received death threats since his return. The paramilitary leader Castaño went missing in 2004 and was found dead this year. With paramilitaries engaged in peace talks, many analysts think they are less likely to strike against critics. Yet if the situation were to worsen, Molano said he is adamant about staying in Colombia. “I will face whatever comes on my own terms in my own country.” ■

It takes three people to produce a story for the state-run newspaper in Belarus:

One who writes

One who deletes

and

One who makes sure enough is deleted



Mick Stern