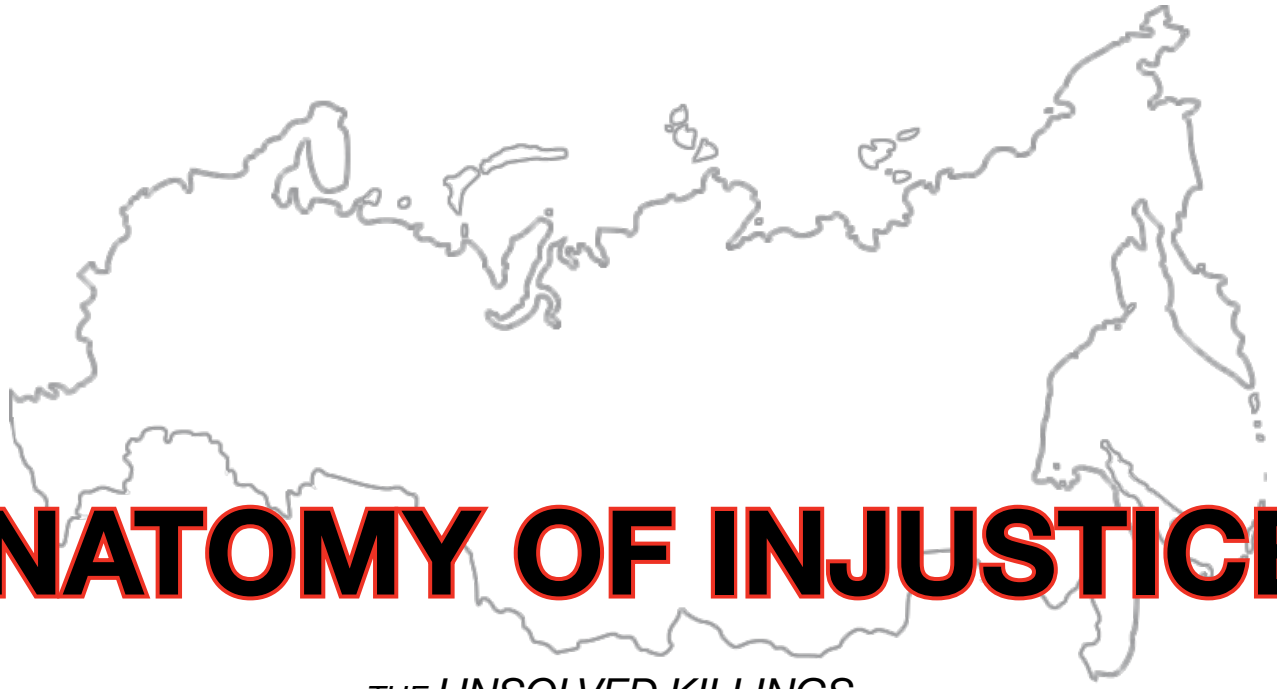

ANATOMY OF INJUSTICE

THE UNSOLVED KILLINGS OF JOURNALISTS IN RUSSIA

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A SPECIAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS
Issued September 2009

Founded in 1981, the Committee to Protect Journalists responds to attacks on the press worldwide. CPJ documents hundreds of cases every year and takes action on behalf of journalists and news organizations without regard to political ideology. To maintain its independence, CPJ accepts no government funding. CPJ is funded entirely by private contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was researched and written by **Nina Ognianova**, CPJ Europe and Central Asia program coordinator, with assistance from **Muzaffar Suleymanov**, CPJ research associate, and **Alex Lupis**, CPJ Europe and Central Asia program coordinator from 2000 to 2006. The reporting is based on four CPJ missions to Russia and extensive interviews with journalists, analysts, and officials. Reporting from Russia was contributed by journalists **Aleksandr Mnatsakanyan** and **Irada Huseynova**.

CPJ research has consistently identified Russia as one of the deadliest countries in the world for the press (ranked third worldwide) and one of the worst nations in solving crimes against the press (ranked ninth worst). CPJ delegations have met with Russian officials to discuss the grave problem of impunity in attacks on the press. This report examines the deaths of 17 journalists in Russia since 2000, identifying systemic investigative shortcomings and outlining potential remedies. In only one of these cases have the killers been convicted.

CPJ gratefully acknowledges the vital work of several contributing writers. The Chapter 2 sidebar, "Roadmap for the International Community" was written by the Belgian journalist **Jean-Paul Marthoz**. "In Defense of Jury Trials," the sidebar to Chapter 3, was written by **Leonid Nikitinsky**, head of the Guild of Court Reporters of Russia.

Andrei Soldatov, a leading expert on Russian security services, wrote the Chapter 5 sidebar, "When Everything Is 'Top Secret.'" The Moscow-based media analyst **Maria Lipman** wrote the sidebar to Chapter 6, "Public Apathy Hampers Press." The sidebar to Chapter 8, "No Place for Justice," was written by former CPJ Executive Director **Ann Cooper**. More complete author information accompanies each piece.

Excerpts from the work of the late journalists are presented in the Appendix to this report thanks to the cooperation of a number of people. CPJ consultant **Ekaterina Lysova** compiled the excerpts and translated many of them for this report. The following publications graciously granted reprint permission: *Forbes*, *Novaya Gazeta*, *Johnson's Russia List*, *Novy Reft*, *Kommersant*, *Nashe Vremya*, *Molodoi Kommunar*, *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*, *Ingushetiya*, and *Gorod*.

CPJ wishes to acknowledge the invaluable research of the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, led by **Oleg Panfilov**, and the Glasnost Defense Foundation, headed by **Aleksei Simonov**. The staffs of these Moscow press freedom organizations work tirelessly to document abuses and advocate on behalf of journalists. Human rights lawyers **Karen Nersisian** and **Karinna Moskalenko** provided important insight on legal issues. We also drew on research conducted by the writer **Terry Gould**, whose 2009 book, *Marked for Death*, explores the murders of three Russian journalists in great detail.

We are very grateful for the generous amount of time and the indispensable expertise provided by the editors and reporters of *Novaya Gazeta*. The newspaper's staff has exhaustively investigated the deaths of four slain colleagues and other murdered Russian journalists.

CPJ extends special thanks to the families and colleagues of the 17 slain journalists. They graciously gave their time, and their input was invaluable. ■

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PREFACE
By Kati Marton

It is a sad irony: While the world celebrates the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Russia itself is relapsing to some of its Soviet ways. In fact, for journalists, Russia is a more dangerous place now than it was during the Cold War. Only Iraq and Algeria outrank Russia on the list of most life-threatening countries for the press. Seventeen journalists have been murdered in Russia since 2000. In only one case have the killers been punished. This is a sorry record for a great and powerful nation that embarked on democratization after more than 70 years of brutal repression.

That is why the Committee to Protect Journalists is releasing an unprecedented report that calls on the international community to help reverse this slide toward lawlessness. Our mission is to protect journalists, and we are less and less able to do so in Russia. Though we continue to appeal to Russian authorities to bring to justice those who murdered our colleagues, we can no longer leave it at that. This report is more than an expression of our outrage. We propose concrete guidelines and present hard facts for restarting investigations into these unsolved murders.

Let us be perfectly plain. Any state that turns a blind eye—or worse—toward the assassination of reporters cannot call itself a democracy. When journalists are threatened, democracy itself is threatened. Along with the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and an autonomous civil society, free media is one of the essential pillars of a healthy society. Remove one, and the whole structure may collapse.

When U.S. democracy was in its earliest days, two and a half centuries ago, one of its champions,

Above, clockwise from top left: Yuri Shchekochikhin, Vagif Kochetkov, Eduard Markevich, Anna Politkovskaya (Novaya Gazeta), Maksim Maksimov, Ivan Safronov (Kommersant), Igor Domnikov (Novaya Gazeta), Telman Alishayev, and Vladimir Yatsina. Except where noted, photos courtesy of the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations.

Patrick Henry, said, "The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be, secure, when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them."

In Russia today, the rulers' transactions are increasingly concealed from the ruled. Disturbingly, as brave and determined truth-tellers are felled by assassins' bullets, the Russian people have responded with a collective shrug. The reason for this apathy is evident. The vast majority of Russians get only government-filtered news, so outrage at these murders has been muted. Who in Russia will be left to hold authority accountable if the truth-tellers are written off as expendable?

During the Cold War there were established rules, and reporters knew which lines not to cross, which subjects to avoid. Not so today. The 17 who have been killed in recent years covered a wide range of topics: organized crime, corporate corruption, bribe-taking among public officials, unrest in the Northern Caucasus republics (for, though the war in Chechnya has been pronounced over, in reality, bloodletting has merely relocated to its neighbors). A charade of justice followed each of these killings. Typically, authorities quickly substitute robbery or personal grudges for real motives. At times, the official response would be comic were it not for the tragic outcomes.

In Togliatti, Russia's Detroit, investigators attributed the murder of Aleksei Sidorov, editor of *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*, to a random street brawl. Sidorov, so ran the official story, was stabbed with an ice pick after he refused a stranger's appeals for vodka. Investigators cast only the most casual glance at the murdered reporter's notebooks, computer, and tape recorders. In this case and others, police barely interviewed witnesses. Investigators rarely visited the victims' news organizations. These crimes are attributed to "hooligans," and the trail suddenly goes cold. Those who actually dispatch the hit men can breathe easy. The same curtain of secrecy that shrouded the KGB now protects its successor, the Federal Security Service.

Of course, truth was in short supply during the Cold War, and those who insisted on challenging the official version of events were often dispatched to long prison terms. My own parents, Endre and Ilona Marton, the last independent media members behind the Iron Curtain, were tried and convicted on fake charges of being CIA agents, for merely doing their jobs as American wire service reporters in Budapest. There was no CPJ then to protest, or to name and shame my parents' captors and keep the pressure up, the way CPJ did to such powerful effect recently in the case of Roxana Saberi in Iran. As in Roxana's case, my parents' long prison sentences were cut short, and they were freed in 1956, after a barrage of articles in *The New York Times*.

Any state that turns a blind eye—or worse—toward the assassination of reporters cannot call itself a democracy.

Few journalists have paid a higher price for their courage than those who work for *Novaya Gazeta*, among the most vibrant and independent voices left in the dimming Russian media landscape. Imagine going to work each day passing giant portraits of your newspaper's three star reporters—Igor Domnikov, Yuri Shchekochikhin, and Anna Politkovskaya—all murdered. We honored *Novaya Gazeta*'s editor, Dmitry Muratov, with our International Press Freedom Award in 2007. For the sake of Russian society, the international community must do more than heap praise on murdered reporters.

In his 2008 inaugural address, Dmitry Medvedev declared that under his presidency the protection of human rights and freedom would drive "the sense and the substance of all state policy." In Berlin a month later, he pledged that "all instances related to attempts on the life and health of journalists will be investigated and prosecuted to the end, regardless of when they occurred." We at CPJ will continue to remind him of that pledge and of the fact that a great nation with a legitimate

claim to leadership on the world stage must uphold the rule of law on behalf of all citizens. We need world leaders, including those in the United States and Europe, to drive home that message.

Three years ago, at a memorial service for Anna Politkovskaya, one of the bravest of the brave, I pledged that we at CPJ would not forget Anna, what she stood for, and what she gave her life for. And so we have not. But Anna's case remains unsolved. This past February, the three defendants in her murder trial walked free. It is true the evidence presented in court against them was skimpy. Once again, the state had given the masterminds an easy pass. Only the small fry were in the dock.

Even as we at CPJ pressed for a renewed investigation, another of Anna's colleagues at *Novaya Gazeta* was gunned down on a Moscow street. Twenty-five-year-old Anastasiya Baburova's assassination has pushed reporters at *Novaya Gazeta* to the edge. The paper's management has asked the government to allow its reporters to carry guns as a condition of doing their jobs—another stain on the face of a nation that the world expected would be much farther along on the road to democracy on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. ■

Kati Marton *is a board member of the Committee to Protect Journalists. Her seventh book,* Enemies of the People—My Family's Journey to America*, a Cold War memoir, will be published by Simon and Schuster in October 2009.*

Below, clockwise from top left: Paul Klebnikov (AP), Natalya Skryl, Magomed Yevloyev, Pavel Makeev, Magomedzagid Varisov, Anastasiya Baburova, Aleksei Sidorov, and Valery Ivanov. Except where noted, photos courtesy of the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations.

1 SUMMARY

Seventeen journalists have died in relation to their work. In only one case have convictions been won. Systemic failures have created a devastating record of injustice.

The Committee to Protect Journalists prepared this report to highlight the alarming and ongoing problem of deadly violence against critical journalists in Russia and the government's consistent inability to bring justice in these cases. CPJ's analysis points to systemic failures that if left unaddressed will further erode free expression and the rule of law in Russia. Vital national and international interests are at stake.

A record of impunity

Seventeen journalists have been killed in retaliation for their work since 2000. The victims represent the breadth of Russian journalism: editors, reporters, photographers, columnists, and a publisher. Some had earned international reputations; others were local reporters probing issues important to their communities. They shared one thing: All were engaged in critical reporting that threatened powerful interests in government, business, law enforcement, or criminal groups.

In only one case have the killers been convicted. CPJ research shows Russia to be the world's third deadliest country for the press and the ninth worst in solving journalist murders. Russia has been a consistently dangerous place throughout the last two decades; CPJ is examining the period 2000-09 because it reflects the record of the current leadership.

This record of impunity in journalism-related killings stands in sharp contrast to Russia's stated record in solving murders among the general population. Aleksandr Bastrykin, who as head of the Investigative Committee at the Prosecutor General's Office is one of the country's top law enforcement officials, has said that the vast majority of murders have been solved in recent years.

Even as this report went to press, two more journalists were slain: Reporter and activist Natalya Estemirova was kidnapped and killed in Chechnya, while Vyacheslav Yaroshenko, editor of the Rostov-on-Don newspaper *Korruptsiya i Prestupnost*, died after an assault. CPJ is now investigating the circumstances of those killings as well.

Shortcomings at all levels

The failure to achieve justice reflects shortcomings at every level: political, investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial.

The Kremlin has set the political tone by marginalizing critical journalists, effectively barring them from state-controlled national television, and obstructing their work through politicized regulations and bureaucratic harassment. Probing journalists—often shunted to media with limited audiences—are isolated, undervalued, and vulnerable to attack.

CPJ's analysis shows that the murder investigations have been consistently opaque, often marred by conflicts of interest, and frequently subject to undue influence from external political forces. Time and again, CPJ found, investigators failed to follow up on journalism-related leads, examine work material, or question professional contacts. Important evidence has been concealed at times without clear explanation.

In some instances, prosecutors have brought ill-prepared cases to trial, and in at least one case they brought bogus charges against an innocent man. Judicial officials have made questionable or unexplained decisions, from closing courtrooms to leaving jurors exposed to intimidation. At all levels, authorities have failed to communicate with victims' families about even the most basic

case developments. These secretive practices have deterred accountability, encouraged the manipulation of the justice system, and undermined public trust.

Compelling reasons to change

This situation has led to self-censorship in the Russian press, leaving issues of vital importance underreported or entirely uncovered. In-depth, critical journalism is in danger of becoming extinct in one of the world's most influential countries. If Russia is to pursue a democratic future it cannot allow the levers of power to be unexamined by independent journalists.

At stake in these 17 cases is Russia's commitment to the rule of law for all citizens—including even the harshest Kremlin critics. The constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the right to life and the freedom to exchange ideas; it obligates the government to protect those rights.

President Dmitry Medvedev said he is committed to rooting out corruption, standing up for the rule of law, and getting to the bottom of unsolved journalist murders. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has also said attacks on journalists need to be addressed. Such pledges are important, but they are only the first step in an arduous process that will require strong, ongoing political will.

This is not solely a domestic issue. The international community has a deep and intrinsic interest in upholding the basic human rights to life and free expression. When a powerful nation, an influential member of numerous international organizations, does not protect basic human rights, it erodes those rights for everyone.

The road to justice

Fundamental steps can address this record of impunity. The changes need to start with the political tone set by the Kremlin. President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin should condemn all attacks on the press in clear, public, and unequivocal terms. They should halt efforts to marginalize or criminalize critical journalism. And they should hold top law enforcement officials accountable for solving murders and violent crimes against journalists.

Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika and Investigative Committee Chairman Bastrykin should order a thorough re-examination of all 17 of these cases. Unchecked leads should be pursued, wanted suspects should be tracked down, professional motives should be thoroughly examined. Where there are conflicts of interest, cases should be reassigned. Investigators and prosecutors should communicate clearly and regularly with victims' families. Given Russia's centralized law enforcement system, Chaika and Bastrykin have the ability and the obligation to hold local subordinates accountable for their actions.

The international community must hold Russian leaders accountable for their record on this issue. World leaders have the ability to scrutinize the record, use political persuasion to effect change, and take substantive action in international legal forums.

All of this will be needed—and all of this is possible—to change this record of injustice. ■

2 A RECORD OF IMPUNITY: *Seventeen Deaths*

Secrecy, indifference, conflicts mar investigations into journalist deaths. Moscow has a responsibility to uphold the rule of law. Its international partners have an obligation, too.

In his inaugural address on May 7, 2008, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev pledged to "do everything so that the safety of citizens would not only be guaranteed by the law but effectively secured by the state." Strengthening the rule of law, he said, would be a priority of his presidency. On a number of occasions since, the president has voiced his commitment to investigating attacks against one particularly vulnerable segment of Russian society: its journalists. Medvedev's commitment echoed a pledge by his predecessor, Vladimir Putin, now prime minister, who told reporters in the Kremlin's Round Hall in February 2007 that "the issue of journalist persecution is one of the most pressing." He added, "We will do everything to protect the press corps."

Commitments made at the highest levels of government are significant, particularly given Russia's centralized law enforcement system. But these promises have yet to be fulfilled.

The record is unambiguous: Since 2000, 17 journalists have been killed in Russia in retaliation for their work. In only one case have the killers been convicted and, even there, the masterminds remain at large. (Three other journalists were killed by crossfire during conflict situations this decade.) Russia is among the deadliest countries in the world for journalists, and it is also among the worst in solving crimes against the press, according to CPJ research.

Conditions have been consistently dangerous for the news media throughout the post-Soviet era: CPJ research shows Russia has been the world's third deadliest nation for journalists not only in this decade, but since the birth of the Russian Federation. But CPJ data also show that targeted murders of reporters have climbed this decade, even as the Kremlin has centralized power and limited the influence of independent journalists. This report focuses on the period 2000-09 because it reflects the record of the current administration.

The pattern of impunity in journalist killings contrasts sharply with Russian law enforcement's stated record in solving murders among the general population. Law enforcement agencies are solving the vast majority of murders in recent years, as many as four out of five, Aleksandr Bastrykin, one of the nation's top justice officials, said in a May 2009 interview with the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*.

CPJ's investigation, based on interviews with dozens of sources and its review of hundreds of pages of documents and news accounts, reveals systemic shortcomings that have thwarted justice in journalist killings.

The 17 victims worked in big cities and small towns across Russia: in the country's great capital, Moscow; in the industrial cities of Togliatti, Taganrog, and Tula; in tiny Reftinsky in the Urals; in warm Azov on the Don River; in the historic city of St. Petersburg; and in the volatile North Caucasus republics of Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Dagestan. They were veterans who had earned international acclaim, and they were young reporters trying to cover injustice in local communities. The victims included reporters and editors, a publisher and an analyst, a cameraman and a photographer. Four of the 17 worked for a single newspaper, *Novaya Gazeta*, an intrepid Moscow publication that continues to produce critical coverage despite its terrible losses.

For all their differences, the victims shared one thing: They covered sensitive subjects in probing ways that threatened the powerful, from government officials to businesspeople, military to militants, law enforcement officers to criminal gang members. Here, in the order in which they appear in this report, are the 17 women and men who lost their lives in the pursuit of their work:

Paul Klebnikov, the editor of *Forbes Russia* who covered the connections between business, politics, and organized crime. A drive-by gunman silenced him in the street outside his Moscow office on July 9, 2004.

Anna Politkovskaya, who produced devastating reports on human rights abuses in the North Caucasus for *Novaya Gazeta*. An assassin gunned her down in her Moscow apartment building on October 7, 2006.

Eduard Markevich, the founder of a tiny weekly, *Novy Reft*, who questioned whether public employees in Reftinsky were using their offices for personal gain. An assailant shot him in the back on September 19, 2001.

Pavel Makeev, a cameraman for Puls television, who tried to film illegal drag racing outside his town of Azov. Evidence shows a driver struck him May 20, 2005, and dragged him 50 feet, never applying the brakes. His equipment and video were taken.

Yuri Shchekochikhin, deputy editor of *Novaya Gazeta*, who for two years meticulously uncovered a complex international corruption scheme. He was felled by a mysterious illness and died July 3, 2003. His medical records were classified a state secret.

Ivan Safronov, military correspondent for the business daily *Kommersant*, whose exclusive reports described a missile failure and questionable arms sales. He fell more than four stories from a window in his Moscow apartment building on March 2, 2007.

Maksim Maksimov, a reporter with the St. Petersburg weekly *Gorod*, who was investigating reports of corruption in the local Interior Ministry branch. He disappeared after going to meet a source on June 29, 2004, and has since been declared dead.

Magomed Yevloyev, publisher of the independent news Web site *Ingushetiya*, who exposed official corruption and human rights crimes in the restive southern republic. He was shot and killed in state custody on August 31, 2008.

Natalya Skryl, a business reporter for *Nashe Vremya*, who was covering the struggle for control of a steel-pipe plant in her hometown of Taganrog. An assailant bludgeoned her to death on a street near her home on March 8, 2002.

Vagif Kochetkov, a political reporter for *Molodoi Kommunar*, who had written critically about business practices and organized crime in Tula. An attacker struck him on the head with a blunt object near his home on December 27, 2005. He died 12 days later.

Valery Ivanov and **Aleksei Sidorov**, consecutive editors of the independent newspaper *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*, who exposed organized crime and government corruption in the car-manufacturing city of Togliatti. Assailants shot Ivanov repeatedly at point-blank range on April 29, 2002, and, 18 months later, on October 9, 2003, stabbed Sidorov again and again with an ice pick. Both were killed right outside their homes.

Vladimir Yatsina, **Magomedzagid Varisov**, and **Telman Alishayev**, who were working in the volatile North Caucasus region. Yatsina, a photographer, had traveled to Chechnya on a freelance assignment when members of a criminal gang kidnapped him in July 1999 and then shot him the following February. Varisov, a political analyst with Dagestan's largest weekly, *Novoye Delo*, had criticized people across the political spectrum before gunmen shot him on June 28, 2005. Alishayev, a reporter and host for the Islamic TV-Chirkei in Dagestan, had reported on sensitive religious issues before an assailant gunned him down on September 2, 2008.

ROADMAP FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The struggle for human rights demands the exertion of internal and external pressure. If Russia has seemed resistant, it is not as impervious as it might seem.

By Jean-Paul Marthoz

From the fight against apartheid to the mobilization against Latin American military regimes in the 1980s, human rights campaigns proved most effective when they linked external and internal pressure.

This formula is not easily applied to Russia. Since Vladimir Putin's rise to power, internal democratic opposition has been marginalized, most media have been muzzled, and nongovernmental organizations have been severely restricted.

At the United Nations, Russia has used its status as a permanent member of the Security Council and has built coalitions in the Human Rights Council to shield its human rights record from serious inspection and to insulate itself from international condemnation. Moscow has also exploited rifts within the international community, in particular within the European Union. The "war against terror," the resurgence of Russian power (especially in its "near abroad"), and the Kremlin's oil- and gas-leveraged diplomacy have provided Western leaders with arguments for cautious accommodation.

Yet Russia is not such an isolated country, noted leading human rights lawyer Karinna Moskalenko. "The Russian authorities know that they have to pay some attention to the reaction of the international community."

Russia is a member of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a group officially committed to human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has joined the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe, an intergovernmental organization premised on respect for the European Convention on Human Rights. It is accountable to the influential European Court of Human Rights. "Russia's links with the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the EU open up advocacy interstices," said Philippe Hensmans, executive director of Amnesty International Belgium. "They provide tools and instruments … to scrutinize Moscow's compliance with human rights."

The problem, writes Sinikukka Saari, an analyst at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, "has not so much to do with a lack of instruments, but the will to use them." Many European institutions have remained timid in the face of Kremlin resistance. Rankled by rulings from the European Court of Human Rights that "highlight corruption, torture, and other official misconduct in Russia," *New York Times* correspondent Clifford Levy reported in March, the Kremlin has pushed back, notably by blocking court plans to streamline procedures.

Some European leaders are becoming concerned that tolerance of human rights violations in Russia is weakening key institutions such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe. "In recent years," Saari noted in a 2006 report, "Russia has been attacking these organizations, claiming, for instance, that the OSCE should move away from its human dimension emphasis."

What could lead European governments to be more vocal? "The realization that it is in their own, best national interest to have a more democratic Russian neighbor," replied Hensmans. "We have to convince our own governments that the EU's main policy objective of assuring stability and predictability in Russia does not mean the downplaying of human rights. On the contrary, an undemocratic Russia is a threat to international stability."

The view among most European human rights groups is that Brussels should adopt a more proactive policy that makes reinforcement of the rule of law in Russia a strategic priority. On the eve of the EU-Russia summit in May, Human Rights Watch concurred: "EU leaders should build on President Medvedev's recently expressed readiness for human rights reform. The EU should jump at this chance to work with him."

For advocates, it means building stronger coalitions among free expression and human rights organizations to target all forums—the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the U.N. Human Rights Council,

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and UNESCO—where Russia has pledged to abide by international norms. That the killings of prominent journalists have yet to lead to major public mobilizations in Europe reflects in part the weak and intermittent links between European and Russian civil societies. "Developing this interaction should be the priority of international human rights groups," said Aude Merlin, a Russia specialist at Brussels University.

The approach also requires going beyond U.S. or European groups that can be easily dismissed as "Western interventionists" and reaching out to civil society organizations and independent media in countries such as Brazil, India, and South Africa, emerging powers in parts of the world where Russia wants to be seen as a reliable partner.

The reinforcement of civil society in Russia itself is another priority. International human rights groups have advocated the lifting of Russian restrictions on nongovernmental organizations and an increase in international assistance to Russian civil society.

Elena Klitsounova, author of a working paper published by the Brussels-based Centre for European Policy Studies, suggests that international groups should "frame the human rights message in ways that are appealing to Russia's public." That could be done by insisting that freedom of the press and human rights are not "foreign impositions" but key elements to every citizen's security and prerequisites for sustainable and fair development. ■

Jean-Paul Marthoz *is a Belgian journalist and writer. A foreign affairs columnist for* Le Soir *(Brussels), he teaches international journalism at the Université catholique de Louvain. He is a former European press director of Human Rights Watch and is a senior adviser for CPJ's Global Campaign Against Impunity.*

Anastasiya Baburova, a freelancer for *Novaya Gazeta*, who covered the activities of neo-fascist groups. A gunman shot her and prominent human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov in Moscow as they emerged from a January 19, 2009, press conference detailing the early prison release of a Russian colonel convicted of murdering a Chechen girl.

And **Igor Domnikov**, *Novaya Gazeta* reporter and special-projects editor, who had criticized the economic policies of regional administrators in Lipetsk. An assailant struck him with a hammer outside his Moscow apartment on May 12, 2000, leading to his death two months later.

The failure to achieve justice in these cases can be traced to every stage of the process: political, investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial.

The political climate is set by the Kremlin, where leaders have sought to obstruct and marginalize critical journalists. Probing journalists are effectively banned from influential national television channels and are pushed instead to limited-audience print and Internet publications. In such a climate, these reporters find themselves isolated, unprotected, and undervalued; their enemies, by turn, are emboldened to use violence, the ultimate form of censorship.

An opaque law-enforcement bureaucracy has made pivotal decisions without offering public explanation or even informing victims' families and legal representatives. When a Moscow prosecutor's office closed the criminal investigation into Ivan Safronov's mysterious death, it did not bother to notify the journalist's family. Dagestani investigators say they killed one suspect in the Telman Alishayev slaying and identified another, but the victim's family says it has never heard anything directly from authorities.

Such a closed process deters accountability. In some cases, important evidence has been shielded from the public and the families. When

Yuri Shchekochikhin's family tried to learn more about his death, officials at the government-run clinic where the journalist was treated sealed the medical records. In other cases, agencies hand off responsibility for stalled investigations from one to another. CPJ's inquiries in the Natalya Skryl case, for example, were passed among three offices, none of which responded substantively as of July.

Significant investigative gaps have marred several cases. Investigators did not question an alleged conspirator in Vladimir Yatsina's abduction and killing even though the man was known to be living and attending school in Moscow. In the Eduard Markevich case, authorities detained a suspect almost immediately but allowed him to walk away while the case was shuffled between prosecutors. Vagif Kochetkov's slaying was written off as a robbery by investigators who were uninterested in examining professional motives.

When prosecutors have gone to court, cases have been weak and, in one case, bogus. Prosecutors in the Anna Politkovskaya murder trial presented flawed and incomplete evidence to a skeptical jury, who acquitted three defendants. In the Aleksei Sidorov slaying, authorities coerced a confession and falsified evidence against an innocent man; the defendant was acquitted.

Questionable and unexplained judicial decisions plagued the Paul Klebnikov case. The presiding judge took no measures to protect jurors, who were subjected to intimidation by the defendants. Later, a court moved the retrial of the two suspects off the docket without disclosing the reasons or the person who made the decision.

Inherent conflicts of interest have gone unaddressed, with predictable results. Although Magomed Yevloyev was shot in the custody of Ingushetia Interior Ministry officers, the investigation was left in the hands of local authorities. They swiftly sided with the shooter—nephew of Ingushetia's then-interior minister—and declared Yevloyev's death accidental. In the slaying of Maksim Maksimov, St. Petersburg authorities made no evident effort to follow up on allegations that local police may have been involved.

In some cases, authorities at various levels have appeared susceptible to external pressure. Pavel Makeev's death while filming drag racers in Azov was declared a traffic accident by the same police who had been accused of permitting the illegal activity. In Togliatti, a city plagued by corruption, investigators ignored journalism-related motives in the slaying of the muckraking Valery Ivanov.

Some relatives, left vulnerable to intimidation, have abandoned what they have come to see as a hopeless fight for justice. After her husband's murder, Tatyana Markevich was subjected to threats that forced her to leave town. Skryl's mother, Nellya, told CPJ she had been warned "not to interfere" in the case of her murdered daughter if she wished no harm to come to her "living" relatives.

Despite the evident despair, there are many reasons for hope. For both Russia and the international community, there are compelling reasons to correct this record of impunity.

For Russia's leaders, it is a matter of upholding national security and the rule of law. President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin have made commitments to protect their country's stability, fight corruption, and ensure the safety of all of their citizens. When 17 journalists are killed for asking tough questions and not a single case is fully solved, the government is not meeting its duty to uphold the law.

Some Russian officials have suggested the country's record of impunity is an internal matter and that the world should not meddle. But Russia's partners in Europe and throughout the world have a deep and intrinsic interest. Deadly violence leads to pervasive self-censorship among journalists, leaving issues of international importance underreported or entirely uncovered. A nation that closes its society raises questions about its reli-

ability as an international partner.

Russia is an influential player in numerous international organizations, but membership comes with obligations to respect internationally recognized human rights. When Russia does not honor those rights at home, it erodes those rights for all. This is particularly true when it comes to Russia's "near abroad." Moscow remains a political and moral force for many of the former Soviet states, which emulate its attitudes and policies on human rights and press freedom.

The international community must remind Russia's leaders of its responsibilities and seek results at every opportunity.

The challenge is daunting, but leaders in Moscow can reverse the country's record of impunity. As this report shows, the failures in the investigation and prosecution of these 17 journalist deaths stem from authorities' reluctance—not their inability—to pursue cases to a successful end. Russia has considerable security, scientific, economic, and human resources.

In the cases where conflicts of interest have hampered probes, new and independent investigators should be assigned and, where appropriate, cases should be transferred out of current jurisdictions entirely. Rather than maintain walls of secrecy, authorities should choose transparency and accountability to restore citizens' trust in state institutions. Officials should communicate regularly with relatives of the victims and allow them access to case files. Court proceedings should be open to the public.

Cases that are technically open but dormant in practical terms must be revived: Unchecked leads should be pursued, missing suspects sought, witnesses and potential suspects tracked down and questioned. Where professional motives were dismissed without sufficient investigation, authorities should refocus their efforts on the victim's journalism.

In Russia's centralized law enforcement system, local prosecutors and investigators ultimately report to Moscow. This system demands that federal authorities exert greater oversight of the activities of their local subordinates. The Prosecutor General's Office headed by Yuri Chaika and the Investigative Committee headed by Aleksandr Bastrykin share practical responsibility for these 17 cases.

President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin, as Russia's top leaders, share a moral responsibility. They can start by condemning—publicly and unequivocally—all acts of violence against journalists, by allowing critical reporters to repopulate Russia's public space, and by demanding from law enforcement officials concrete results in solving crimes against the press. Doing so would promote a stable, just society for all Russians and demonstrate Moscow's commitment to being an international leader. ■

3 HIGH PROFILE, LOW SUCCESS:
Two Cases Fall Apart

Assassins targeted the internationally known journalists Paul Klebnikov and Anna Politkovskaya two years apart in Moscow. Despite promises, arrests, and trials, no one has been brought to justice.

Much seemed to go right in the investigations into the murders of *Forbes Russia* Editor Paul Klebnikov and *Novaya Gazeta* reporter Anna Politkovskaya. Investigators recognized the journalists had been killed in retaliation for their work. Prosecutors charged suspects and brought cases to trial before juries.

Few other investigations into journalist murders have reached this level of progress in Russia. Yet neither case ended in convictions, an outcome that laid bare systemic weaknesses in the judicial system: a lack of transparency, an absence of accountability, a susceptibility to external influences, and an inability to pursue cases to their conclusion.

In the Klebnikov case, which was tried behind closed doors, a series of questionable judicial decisions tainted the conduct of the proceedings. Most notably, the presiding judge left jurors vulnerable to intimidation and appeared to intervene in the verdicts. After two defendants were acquitted in the 2004 killing, a prosecutor publicly decried "serious violations" in court procedures. But though the government appealed and won the right to retry the case, one defendant disappeared and the case was not brought back to court. The purported mastermind was never apprehended.

Much of the Politkovskaya trial was open to the public, despite the presiding judge's attempts to close the proceedings. In this case, the openness of the proceedings revealed major weaknesses in the state's case. Three defendants—the alleged middleman, getaway driver, and lookout—were acquitted in the 2006 murder, although the Supreme Court ordered a retrial. The man identified by the government as the gunman disappeared before he could be charged. No mastermind has been identified. According to *Novaya Gazeta*, the independent Moscow newspaper, powerful interests prevented the investigation from digging deep enough or reaching high enough to learn the truth about Politkovskaya's murder.

Paul Klebnikov, 41, the founding editor of *Forbes Russia,* was working late on July 9, 2004. As he left his Moscow office around 10 p.m., at least one gunman fired nine times from a passing car. The wounded Klebnikov described an assailant with "black hair, black clothes" but did not know the person's identity or who might have been behind the shooting, said *Russian Newsweek* journalist Aleksandr Gordeyev, who talked with the journalist while an ambulance was on its way.

Klebnikov, an American of Russian descent, had launched the magazine's Russian edition just months before, in April 2004, believing that reforms were propelling the country toward greater transparency in business and politics. In his first commentary for the magazine, he wrote that Russian business had arrived at a "new, more civilized stage of development," and he cited the launch of his magazine as evidence. A veteran investigative journalist, Klebnikov immediately put Russia's business elite in the limelight by publishing a list of the country's wealthiest people, "The Golden Hundred." The list caused a stir among the country's entrenched oligarchs, most of whom preferred to keep descriptions of their assets off the pages of a high-profile magazine.

Klebnikov was no stranger to risky topics. Among the sensitive subjects he explored were the 1995 murder of television journalist Vladislav Listyev and the "gangster capitalism" of the 1990s. While his investigations often focused on the

IN DEFENSE OF JURY TRIALS

If justice failed when juries acquitted suspects in two high-profile cases, it was not the jurors' fault. Indeed, the jury system may prove the best route to justice.

By Leonid Nikitinsky

The acquittals that juries handed out in the murders of journalists Paul Klebnikov and Anna Politkovskaya defied public expectations. But was that the juries' fault? Having been involved with the Russian Jurors' Association for two years now, and having interviewed (not for publication but as part of a selection process for participation in the association) hundreds of former jurors from various regions of Russia, I understand their logic well enough.

Setting attendant circumstances aside (and though they may have existed in the Klebnikov case, I am confident they did not in the Politkovskaya case), when presented with hard evidence of the guilt of defendants, jurors will pronounce them guilty; in the presence of unreliable evidence, they will most likely acquit them. The worst the prosecution can do during a jury trial is lie to the jurors or hide something from them—and in the Politkovskaya case, in which neither triggerman nor mastermind was on trial, that is exactly what happened.

The *Novaya Gazeta* newsroom, as well as the public in general, accepted the jury verdict with understanding. Moreover, we think this verdict could prevent investigating authorities from pretending that the crime has been "solved."

I recall one judge's comment as instructive: "The logic of jurors may not coincide with my own, but it is always present." Jurors never pull a verdict out of a hat; there is always reasoning behind it. The logic of jurors is that they adamantly—sometimes maybe even forcefully—stand by the presumption of innocence; doubt is construed to the benefit of the defendant. Judges talk about this principle all the time in their opening statements to jurors, but it is the judges in Russia who often "reverse polarity"

connections between Russian business, politics, law enforcement, and organized crime, he also probed armed conflict and political strife in Chechnya. His 2003 Russian-language book, *Conversation With a Barbarian*, drew on interviews with the Chechen separatist leader Khozh-Akhmed Nukhayev.

Russian authorities later declared that Nukhayev, angered by the book's anti-separatist approach, had ordered Klebnikov's killing. Investigators did not disclose the basis for that conclusion, and Nukhayev's whereabouts were never made clear.

The case appeared to get high-priority treatment as then-Prosecutor General Vladimir Ustinov ordered a special crimes unit to investigate. In November 2004, the news agency Interfax reported that police had arrested Musa Vakhayev, a 40-year-old ethnic Chechen, in connection with the murder; Vakhayev was later charged with driving the car from which Klebnikov was shot. In February 2005, Belarusian authorities extradited to Russia a 30-year-old ethnic Chechen named Kazbek Dukuzov, who was charged as the gunman.

By November 2005, the Prosecutor General's Office announced that it had completed its investigation of the two suspects and was ready to proceed against them. The Moscow City Court declared that Dukuzov and Vakhayev would be tried in secret because unspecified classified information would be disclosed. After the trial began in early 2006, Moscow City Court Judge Vladimir Usov imposed a gag order on all trial participants at the request of the prosecution. Court officials said the gag order would help guarantee the safety of jurors and other trial participants. But other, obvious steps to protect jurors were not taken, according to CPJ sources.

Several sources told CPJ that the jury was left open to intimidation during the trial. The defendants and their representatives made a number of threatening statements in the presence of jurors, who were not sequestered and could be readily

approached entering or exiting the courtroom, these sources said. The business daily *Kommersant* later reported in November 2006 that a female juror had complained that Dukuzov told her she would be shot if she did not vote for acquittal.

Richard Behar, an investigative reporter who heads Project Klebnikov, an alliance of journalists working to help solve the killing, said investigators had compiled considerable evidence against Dukuzov and Vakhayev. In a June 2006 *Forbes* article, Behar wrote that investigators had gathered cell phone records indicating the defendants had watched Klebnikov for two weeks before the murder. Through a witness, they had identified the vehicle from which the fatal shots were fired and then found Vakhayev's fingerprints in the car. Prosecutors also elicited testimony from an acquaintance of the defendants who recalled their talking about being paid well for a "big job."

As the jury returned its verdict in May 2006, more questions arose about the conduct of the trial. Usov left the courtroom three times after receiving—but before announcing—the jury's decision. In each instance, he summoned jurors to follow him outside the courtroom, beyond even the limited scrutiny of the closed-door proceedings. Jurors had been instructed to answer a series of questions to reach their verdict—and those answers weren't matching up, *Kommersant* reported on May 6, 2006. "Yesterday, Judge Vladimir Usov was unable to disclose the verdict for a long time," the paper reported. "Three times he returned it to the jury for 'stylistic refinement.' Vakhayev's lawyer, Ruslan Khasanov, explained that the formulations contained inaccuracies and Judge Usov returned the answers with the instruction: 'Think again!'"

The verdict: acquittals for both defendants. Prosecutor Dmitry Shokhin said publicly that "serious violations" of court procedures had led to the verdicts. The prosecution, joined by the Klebnikov family, appealed to Russia's Supreme Court, which overturned the acquittals in November 2006 and ordered a new trial before a new judge.

and, instead of supporting the presumption of innocence (as guaranteed by the Constitution and the Criminal Code), slide to support the presumption of right of the *ment*, or the police.

This is the gist of how jury trials differ from trials before a judge in Russia today. The trial by jury, unlike other practices borrowed from Western law, caught on in Russia—first in the 19th century and, after a 70-year pause, in the 21st century. Evidently, the jury trial corresponds to the traditional Russian understanding that "law" is a synonym of "justice." Naturally, the jury trial, like any other complex social institute, has its downsides. The arguments around it, which are held in Russia quite obdurately, in essence come down to the immemorial question: "What is better (when conditions are not obvious)—to acquit a guilty man or convict an innocent one?"

This question is determined by the political-legal order in the state. In today's Russia, judges and jurors respond to it differently, and which response we adopt as our own depends on the direction we choose to pursue.

As the initiator of the Jurors' Association project, I see the jury as the solid foundation upon which we can build independent justice in Russia, through which we can stop the "presumption of right of the *ment*" and return to the "presumption of innocence." From my communication with former jurors, I am convinced that serving on a jury is a unique school of civil courage and maturity. It is regrettable that very few serious crimes in Russia—less than 1 percent of all criminal cases pending before the courts—are tried before juries. The Jurors' Association will advocate for their broadened jurisdiction. ■

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But Dukuzov, free after his acquittal, had vanished by then. Moscow City Court officials postponed the retrial and moved the case off the docket entirely in 2007, sending it back to the Prosecutor General's Office for further investigation. The court never disclosed who had made this pivotal decision, which effectively sent the case back to step one.

The prosecution appealed again, but the Supreme Court upheld the lower court—a ruling that has perplexed the Klebnikov family and others. "We've been told by our attorney that the transfer of the case is not according to law," the journalist's brother, Peter Klebnikov, said. The Supreme Court has not disclosed its reasoning.

The case is now with the federal Investigative Committee at the Prosecutor General's Office, a semiautonomous agency created in 2007 that is responsible for conducting criminal probes. Petros Garibyan, a senior investigator, said in written comments to CPJ that authorities had obtained an international arrest warrant for Dukuzov. Vakhayev was living openly in Russia, the investigator said. In July, following a summit between President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. counterpart Barack Obama, the government pledged to renew its efforts in the case. "We will achieve our goal by finding those responsible for this crime," Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said.

Anna Politkovskaya, 48, a special correspondent for *Novaya Gazeta,* was shot dead in her Moscow apartment building after returning from a grocery store on the afternoon of October 7, 2006. She was emerging from an elevator in the lobby to retrieve the remaining bags of groceries from her car when a gunman surprised her, firing four times from a 9mm Izh pistol fitted with a silencer. He tossed the gun next to her body and strode off. Security cameras in the building and in the neighborhood captured images of a slender man of average height, clad in dark clothing, his face obscured by a baseball cap.

News of the shooting spread around the world within hours, although international coverage was higher profile than at home. Politkovskaya had received acclaim abroad, but in Russia she was best known in small, liberal circles. A sharp critic of the war in Chechnya—a conflict she had covered for seven years at *Novaya Gazeta*—Politkovskaya had written voluminously about torture, official corruption, and human rights crimes in the North Caucasus. In those seven years, she had repeatedly drawn the wrath of Russian authorities. She was threatened, jailed, forced into exile, and poisoned during her career, CPJ research shows. Her last story, published after her death, detailed the alleged torture of Chechen civilians by military units loyal to Ramzan Kadyrov, the Kremlin-backed local leader. Despite her significant work, Politkovskaya was never interviewed on state-controlled national television, the medium by which most Russians get their news.

President Vladimir Putin's first remarks on the killing—three days after it occurred, in response to a reporter's question—seemed insensitive. "I must say that her political influence (I think experts would agree with me) was insignificant inside the country and, chances are, she was more notable in human rights circles and in mass media circles in the West," the president said in an interview with the Munich-based daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Whether Putin was technically correct in his assessment or not—after all, his government had airbrushed the journalist from the public space—what truly mattered was what he said next. The country's commander-in-chief effectively told Russian prosecutors to rule out politicians and other government officials as suspects. "For current authorities in general and Chechen authorities in particular, Politkovskaya's murder did more damage than her articles," Putin said. "I cannot imagine that anybody currently in office could come to the idea of organizing such a brutal crime." Speaking separately at a public event

in Dresden, he said the murder had been orchestrated "to create a wave of anti-Russian sentiment internationally."

Nearly a year later, on August 27, 2007, Russian Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika told a Moscow news conference that 10 suspects were in custody in connection with the crime. Authorities issued an arrest warrant for an 11th person two days later. Chaika said the suspects included current and former police and Federal Security Service (FSB) officers, along with members of a Chechen-led criminal gang that "specializes in contract killings." Closely echoing Putin's remarks from a year earlier, Chaika suggested the murder plot had been hatched overseas "to destabilize the situation in Russia, discredit the authorities, and change the constitutional system," according to the news agency ITAR-TASS. He did not identify the masterminds or elaborate on the "overseas" theory.

The 11 people detained were not officially identified, but their names were leaked to the press within days. Dmitry Muratov, editor of *Novaya Gazeta*, told CPJ the leaks were damaging to the case because they prompted key conspirators to go into hiding. "According to our sources," *Novaya Gazeta* Deputy Editor Sergei Sokolov wrote in a September 12, 2007, editorial, "these leaks constituted a purposeful policy, whose goal is the destruction of the case."

By the time the Politkovskaya trial started in mid-November 2008 in the Moscow Military District Court, only four of the original 11 suspects remained in custody. Three—Sergei Khadzhikurbanov, a former police officer with the Moscow Directorate for Combating Organized Crime, and ethnic Chechen brothers Dzhabrail and Ibragim Makhmudov—were charged in the killing. A fourth suspect, Pavel Ryaguzov, an FSB lieutenant colonel, was charged with extortion and assault in a case unrelated to the killing. Although Ryaguzov was not charged in connection with the Politkovskaya slaying, his trial was merged with that of the other three defendants because of an alleged association with Khadzhikurbanov.

Khadzhikurbanov was accused of procuring the murder weapon and recruiting Politkovskaya's killers. Dzhabrail, the younger Makhmudov brother, was charged with driving the killer to Politkovskaya's apartment that October afternoon. Older brother Ibragim was accused of watching Politkovskaya and informing accomplices of her return home. A third Makhmudov brother—Rustam—was charged in absentia (but not tried) as the gunman. Investigators said the car Dzhabrail drove—a green Lada—was registered in Rustam's name.

Rustam Makhmudov, according to news reports, fled Russia in the days after the suspects' names were first leaked to the press. *Novaya Gazeta* and others reported that Rustam had bribed an immigration official to issue him a fraudulent passport that allowed him to flee.

The absence of both the alleged killer and mastermind was a burden for the prosecution as the trial began in November 2008. The proceedings got off to a rough start. Judge Yevgeny Zubov first opened the trial to the press, then closed it at the supposed request of the jury, only to reopen it after a juror said publicly that no such request had been made. The juror was dismissed for talking to the press.

It soon became clear that the prosecution's case against the three defendants was tenuous. Lead defense lawyer Murad Musayev, a charismatic ethnic Chechen, raised numerous doubts among jurors and courtroom observers. As *The New Yorker*'s Keith Gessen reported, the defense lawyer argued that the Lada traced to Rustam Makhmudov was one of seven on the block that afternoon. Musayev also undermined the prosecution's description of Politkovskaya's route home from the grocery store, which would have taken her past Ibragim Makhmudov's purported lookout location. The defense lawyer noted that Politkovskaya could easily have taken an alternative route.

But the prosecution took its greatest battering when it came to the Makhmudovs' cell phone records, a central part of the case against the brothers. The records appeared to show that Dzhabrail and Ibragim had phoned each other several times before and after 4 p.m.—the time of the killing. But the prosecution, astonishingly, had introduced as evidence not the original phone records but a spreadsheet re-creation of the records that investigators had compiled. As Gessen reported, the spreadsheet identified the Interior Ministry rather than the phone company as the author, and it contained a discrepancy in the number of calls made between the brothers. The prosecution, Gessen said, explained that the spreadsheet was simply a convenient way for investigators to share the records electronically. A print-out of the phone company's records was finally produced, but the prosecution's credibility had already been damaged. The defense pointed out the obvious: The records were susceptible to doctoring.

The security camera recordings, among the hardest pieces of evidence for the prosecution, proved vulnerable to attack as well. The defense pointed out discrepancies in the time stamps on the recordings made at the grocery store where Politkovskaya shopped, at her apartment building, and at a neighboring bank that showed the street outside her home. More mystifying was the presence on the grocery store tapes of a man and a woman who clearly seemed to be following Politkovskaya. Yet the prosecution offered no explanation. Their faces, unlike that of the suspected killer, were visible on the recordings. Who were these people? Had they been questioned?

Novaya Gazeta's Sokolov said investigators initially followed up on that lead, only to stop abruptly, Gessen reported. The implication, Sokolov said, was that those two people were untouchable.

The defense used the prosecution's gaps and sloppiness to gain momentum. After Musayev's rebuttal of the accusations against the Chechen brothers, Khadzhikurbanov's lawyer did not have to work hard on behalf of his client. He said Khadzhikurbanov could not have organized the crime because he had been released from prison only a month before the killing.

On February 19, the jury took less than two hours to acquit all three defendants in Politkovskaya's murder, and Ryaguzov in the unrelated case. At a news conference immediately afterward, *Novaya Gazeta*'s Sokolov called the verdict "a condemnation of the entire judicial system, which works ineffectively from beginning to end." He spoke of corruption in law enforcement, which, he said, had prevented investigators from doing a better job.

Novaya Gazeta, along with the Politkovskaya family and their lawyers, Karinna Moskalenko and Anna Stavitskaya, though disheartened by the failure to identify and punish the killers, accepted the jury verdict and praised the openness of the trial and what Moskalenko called "a truly competitive process."

It was the transparency that revealed gaps in the prosecution's case and exposed the necessity for a new, effective investigation. "We demand, we need the real killers—the real killers," Moskalenko told reporters after the verdict. "And we will achieve this."

In June, the Supreme Court overturned the acquittals and ordered a retrial of the three defendants. The court found procedural violations in the initial trial, including improper admission of statements that compromised the jury's impartiality. Politkovskaya's colleagues and supporters remained skeptical. The prosecution's case against the three was weak to begin with, they said, and a retrial would not address the main issue—prosecuting those most culpable. "The most important thing for us," Sokolov said, "is that we not only have some secondary characters answer for their actions, but have the real culprits—the killer and the mastermind of the crime—called to the stand." ■

4 LOCAL JOURNALISTS AT RISK:
Profound Impact, Grave Dangers

Enterprising young reporters tackling sensitive local topics are often isolated and vulnerable to reprisals from powerful forces.

In Russia's regions, where crime and corruption go largely unchecked by authorities and unreported by state-controlled media, independent journalists can have an outsize voice. A start-up newspaper or a rookie journalist can expose big stories.

But with a thin support network—professional advocacy groups and independent lawyers are hard-working but strained—these journalists are isolated and vulnerable to reprisal. Law enforcement officials are too often beholden to the interests of local politicians, businessmen, and criminals. The killings of two enterprising young journalists illustrate the danger.

Eduard Markevich put together the first edition of *Novy Reft* in July 1997. At 25, he was a crusading young man out to expose the lawlessness that had frustrated residents of Reftinsky, a town of 19,000 in central Russia, where the main sources of employment were an industrial-size chicken farm and a hydroelectric plant. Markevich and his wife, Tatyana, sold some furniture they got as a wedding gift to buy a computer, he taught himself Photoshop and PageMaker, and they published the weekly, circulation 4,000, from their apartment.

Pavel Makeev was 19 in 2003 when he and his newly remarried mother moved from northern Russia to Azov, a southwestern city of 90,000 on the banks of the Don River. He found work as a cameraman at the local television station, Puls, where he learned to shoot and edit footage for news programs. Among colleagues, the affable young journalist was best known initially for the tasty sandwiches he would make for late-working staff.

Their lives were brutally cut short, an outrage compounded by an evident lack of effort in solving the crimes.

By winter 1998, Eduard Markevich and an independent-minded lawyer, Yuri Kozhevnikov, started investigating allegations that a government official was renting state vocational school space for personal gain. In a startling two-week period, two masked men broke into Markevich's apartment and beat him with metal bars in front of his wife, while an arsonist set fire to Kozhevnikov's apartment. An injured Markevich went ahead and published the article in March, although police made no apparent headway in apprehending suspects in the two attacks.

Markevich was at odds with local authorities again in 2000 when he published a story questioning the propriety of a government contract that gave a former deputy prosecutor exclusive right to represent the Reftinsky administration in court. The journalist was detained on a defamation charge for 10 days before a regional prosecutor intervened and ruled the jailing unlawful.

By 2001, Markevich had gotten a new tip that excited him but prompted him to be unusually secretive—so much so that even his wife said she did not know the topic. Markevich hinted to a friend that the story would be "a real bombshell … a dangerous case," *Novy Reft* later reported. In September 2001, Markevich started getting threatening phone calls and staying inside more often, his wife recalled in an interview with CPJ. An unfamiliar white Zhiguli 10 sedan seemed to be parked frequently near the couple's apartment building.

At 9 p.m. on September 19, 2001, as Markevich was walking through a courtyard toward his building, a man shot the journalist in the back with a sawed-off shotgun and fled in a white Zhiguli 10, according to witnesses cited by *Novy Reft* and Sergei Plotnikov, an analyst for the Moscow-based press freedom group, Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations. As homicide investigators were examining the crime scene, traffic officers about 25 miles (40 kilometers) outside Reftinsky

stopped a car that fit the description from the shooting. They found a large sum of money and detained the driver, according to Plotnikov, who said local prosecutors were "practically euphoric" that they had solved the killing.

Within days, though, the case was transferred without explanation to the Sverdlovsk regional prosecutor's office and the investigation appeared to grind to a halt. After 10 days in detention, the suspect was released due to "insufficient evidence," according to press reports quoting the Sverdlovsk prosecutor's office. Over the next two years, the case was handed off from one lead investigator to another, four in all, only one of whom appeared to demonstrate any interest, according to Plotnikov.

With an eye toward exposing her husband's killers, Tatyana Markevich continued to publish *Novy Reft*. The newspaper reported that Eduard Markevich might have been looking into alleged misuse of state property at the time of his death. He had asked a friend to photograph a state-owned building and another colleague to videotape a gathering of "VIP individuals" at the building, *Novy Reft* reported.

On October 4, 2002, *Novy Reft* published a follow-up article by the lawyer Kozhevnikov on the vocational school allegations that the newspaper had first reported in 1998. Five days after the article was published, as Tatyana was preparing to take the next issue to the printer, a dumbbell with a threatening note was thrown through her apartment window, she recalled. The next morning, she said, she found her apartment door splattered with varnish and saw burnt matches on the ground.

Local police barely examined the crime scene and refused to provide her with any protection, she said. Fearing for her safety and that of her 3-year-old son, Tatyana shut down *Novy Reft* on October 15, 2002, resettled in another town, and took up a new profession.

The Sverdlovsk prosecutor's office would not answer questions from CPJ about its handling of the Markevich case, referring inquiries to the Sverdlovsk branch of the Investigative Committee, an agency created in 2007 to spearhead criminal inquiries. The Sverdlovsk Investigative Committee did not respond to written questions submitted by CPJ in May 2009.

Tatyana Markevich, who eventually received and reviewed the government's investigative file, said she believes the transfer of the case in its early stages, when crucial evidence should have been collected and analyzed, consigned the investigation to failure. "To this day, I do not understand why they didn't get the fingerprints from the car they seized after the murder," she said. She said she suspects that "interference from above" led to the transfer of the case and the release of the one suspect.

One of the slain journalist's friends, local reporter Vyacheslav Martyushov, noted the risks of investigating the intersection of business, politics, and crime in Russia. "There's a reason why contract killings end up in the 'unsolved' category," Martyushov said in an October 2002 interview with *Novy Reft*. "If you dig deep, roots will come to the surface that will lead you upward."

Two years into his fledgling career, Pavel Makeev volunteered to work on a risky story about illegal drag racing said to be organized for the children of businessmen and officials known locally as "the golden youth." Organizers would block traffic on a four-lane stretch of highway outside the city and set up high-stakes betting for the sizable crowds that would gather, according to Puls Editor-in-Chief Aleksei Sklyarov. There were unconfirmed allegations that traffic police had been bribed to look the other way.

At 11:30 p.m. on May 20, 2005, Makeev and a colleague arrived to shoot footage of the racing. An hour and a half later, the young cameraman was dead. Emergency workers received a call around 1 a.m. that a bloodied and severely bruised body had been spotted in a ditch by the highway, according to press reports.

Witnesses reported that a white Zhiguli 9 driven

by a young man had struck Makeev at high speed and dragged him about 50 feet (15 meters), according to Sklyarov, whose station conducted its own investigation into the death. He also pointed to physical evidence: A pool of blood was found on the highway and streaks of blood led to the ditch; no skid marks were found on the pavement; fragments of a broken windshield were scattered on the ground; Makeev's Nokia mobile phone and Sony video camera were gone. The terrified colleague who was with Makeev that night left his job at the television station soon after, the editor told CPJ.

Azov police initially classified the death as involuntary manslaughter due to a "driver violating traffic regulations," according to local press reports. The case was transferred on May 30 to the regional prosecutor's office, which declined to share information with Makeev's family or colleagues, Sklyarov told CPJ. By August 17, the prosecutor's press secretary, Yelena Velikova, announced that authorities had closed the investigation, citing the "absence of evidence of a crime." Prosecutors never identified the driver who had hit Makeev and did not explain how a car with a broken windshield could have passed undetected through police-monitored video checkpoints along the highway, according to local press reports.

Velikova did say at the time that prosecutors had identified a person who had taken Makeev's video camera. No charges were lodged against that individual. In a July 2009 statement, the Rostov prosecutor's office told CPJ it would reopen the case because of lingering questions.

Makeev's colleagues and supporters are deeply skeptical of the police work. "It's clear that the police presented Pavel's death as a traffic accident without ever conducting a thorough investigation," Sklyarov told CPJ. "They didn't look carefully for evidence at the scene, and they didn't bother interviewing the dozens of people who were there when it happened. That's all they needed to do to figure out what had happened so that all of us—Pavel's colleagues and family—would not have to be so tormented by this." ■

A FEDERAL SYSTEM TO INVESTIGATE, PROSECUTE

A centralized federal system, overseen in Moscow with regional offices throughout the country, investigates and prosecutes most serious crimes in Russia, including murders.

A system of Investigative Committees is in charge of most criminal probes. The Russian Investigative Committee in Moscow, headed by Aleksandr Bastrykin, oversees seven federal districts, each of which has an affiliated office. The districts, in turn, are divided into as many as 17 regions. (Certain crimes, such as narcotics or national security offenses, are handled by other agencies.)

The Russian Prosecutor General's office, headed by Yuri Chaika, is in charge of litigating cases. It is arranged in the same hierarchical fashion: seven districts that are, in turn, divided into a number of regions.

The Investigative Committee system is two years old. Before the committee's establishment, the Prosecutor General and its subordinate offices were in charge of both criminal investigations and prosecutions. Under that system, inherited from the Soviet Union, prosecutors opened an inquiry, conducted an investigation, and brought the charges in a courtroom.

The administration of President Vladimir Putin established the Investigative Committee system to promote greater checks and balances. The Investigative Committee is semiautonomous. The committee has its own budget and code of conduct, but it is part of the Prosecutor General's Office and Bastrykin reports to Chaika.

In principle, investigators are responsible for opening a criminal probe and then presenting their findings to prosecutors for review. Prosecutors decide whether to lodge charges and bring a case to court; return the case to investigators for further work; or refer a very serious matter to a superior prosecutor. ■

5 NO FOUL PLAY:
Brushing Aside Suspicious Deaths

The two victims were energetic journalists, expert in their fields, fair in their reporting. They died in suspicious circumstances that have not been fully investigated.

What does the sudden, mysterious illness that killed investigative journalist Yuri Shchekochikhin have in common with the purported suicide of defense correspondent Ivan Safronov four years later?

A lot, as it turns out. Both deaths occurred as the reporters were covering sensitive issues with potentially significant repercussions for authorities; both reporters' lives were cut short under circumstances that were not fully explained or investigated. Evidence was lost, deliberately concealed, or ignored; those who wanted to find the truth—including the colleagues and relatives of the deceased—were denied access to investigative records.

Was Shchekochikhin, as authorities concluded, really the victim of a rare, lethal condition caused by medication? Did Safronov indeed jump from a window in his apartment building just after grocery-shopping and making plans with his family?

Although authorities say there is no evidence of foul play in either case, colleagues and relatives of Shchekochikhin and Safronov believe each was killed for his investigative journalism.

Shchekochikhin, 53, deputy editor of the independent Moscow-based newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, was in the midst of a major investigation. From 2001 until his death in 2003, he was uncovering, layer by layer, an intricate corruption case revolving around a Moscow furniture company, Liga Mars, and its two stores, Grand and Tri Kita. A member of the State Duma, Shchekochikhin used his position to gain access to official sources and sensitive documents related to the case. He had the inside track, the skills, and the guts to tackle the investigation.

On its face, the case looked similar to many others in Russia: The company was accused of smuggling furniture to avoid customs fees. What made the case extraordinary, though, was its wide-ranging nature and indications that it reached high into the government. In his reporting, Shchekochikhin accused Liga Mars of engaging in money laundering and oil and arms smuggling. (The government's problem-filled prosecution is still pending.)

The chain of corruption, Shchekochikhin wrote in his articles in *Novaya Gazeta*, involved high-level officials in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Prosecutor General's Office, and the State Customs Committee.

In an article published on February 18, 2002, Shchekochikhin accused the Prosecutor General's Office, the country's top law enforcement office, of receiving US$2 million in bribes to halt its investigation. He cited a transcript of a wiretapped phone conversation in which a furniture company principal and an unidentified party were said to be plotting reprisals against an MVD investigator trying to expose the scheme. After the story's publication, Shchekochikhin started receiving death threats by telephone. Unfazed, he continued digging.

Over the next two years, Shchekochikhin wrote several stories that sought to link the corruption to international players that included German, Italian, and U.S. concerns, and the main Russian arms exporter, Rosoboroneksport. As he followed the trail, Shchekochikhin criticized Russian prosecutors for what he saw as a pattern of deliberately ignoring evidence and failing to cooperate with international counterparts.

In his last article on the issue, published June 2, 2003, Shchekochikhin covered the gangland-style assassination in a heavily guarded Moscow military hospital of a key witness in the case, and he exposed graphic threats that had been mailed to the presiding judge. By this time, his frustration

at the government's inaction was coming through in his copy: "Do not tell me fairy tales about the independence of judges! ... Until we have a fair trial in this case, files will be destroyed, witnesses intimidated or murdered, and as for investigators—they will either be [wrongfully] convicted or will leave, upset in their efforts to break the wall."

A month after the piece ran, Shchekochikhin was dead—the victim of an unidentified substance that had caused his body to shut down in a matter of days.

On June 17, 2003, while on a brief business trip to a suburb southeast of Moscow, Shchekochikhin fell ill with flu-like symptoms, according to editors at *Novaya Gazeta*. The next day, a doctor visited him at home in Moscow, diagnosed a respiratory infection, and directed him to take over-the-counter medications. Shchekochikhin's health rapidly deteriorated in the next few days, and he was admitted to Moscow's Central Clinical Hospital on June 21. In the next 12 days, the editors said, Shchekochikhin's skin literally peeled off his body, he lost all of his hair, and his internal organs failed one after the other. Shchekochikhin's symptoms, doctors said, were consistent with the extremely rare Lyell's syndrome—an acute dermatological condition most often triggered by medication. Shchekochikhin died on July 3, 2003.

Convinced that the journalist had not died of an ailment he had contracted naturally, *Novaya Gazeta* and Shchekochikhin's relatives filed a request for a criminal investigation. Authorities at the government-run Central Clinical Hospital classified Shchekochikhin's medical records and lab results as a "medical secret" and refused to release them even to his family. For a time, a curious impasse took hold: The hospital said it would release the records only if prosecutors needed them as evidence in a criminal case; prosecutors said that without the test results they could not open a criminal investigation.

Investigators with the Kuntsevskaya Interdistrict prosecutor, a local office, eventually broke the stalemate and obtained the records. But when they submitted the results to their supervisors as part of an appeal to open a criminal investigation, the records were lost and the request rejected, *Novaya Gazeta* Deputy Editor Sergei Sokolov told CPJ. The Kuntsevskaya Interdistrict prosecutor did not respond to a request for comment. Two other prosecutor's offices in Moscow also rejected a request for a criminal probe, although the medical records were no longer available at that point, Sokolov said.

Shchekochikhin's family and colleagues say they never saw the medical records. The lost documents have not resurfaced, *Novaya Gazeta* reported.

Nearly five years after Shchekochikhin's death, on April 4, 2008, a new group of investigators at the Prosecutor General's Office in Moscow opened a criminal case into the editor's death. The Investigative Committee, as it is known, had been formed a year earlier to undertake criminal inquiries, and its staff appeared interested at the time in probing unsolved journalist deaths.

Investigators had Shchekochikhin's body exhumed, enlisted toxicologists to analyze the remains, and questioned numerous witnesses, Sokolov told CPJ. Based on that research, the Investigative Committee closed the criminal inquiry into Shchekochikhin's death. Its decision, dated April 6, 2009, said: "In the course of examination of the samples of Y.P. Shchekochikhin's body tissues, no thallium; narcotics; psychotropic, strong, toxic substances; [or] heavy metals were found. Under these circumstances, in the course of the preliminary investigation, no facts that point to the forcible death of Y.P. Shchekochikhin, including by poisoning, were found."

Sokolov said the Investigative Committee had only the death certificate and secondary documents—and not the detailed, contemporaneous medical records—available for its review. It's not clear whether Central Clinical Hospital maintained copies of Shchekochikhin's medical

WHEN EVERYTHING IS 'TOP SECRET'

Security agencies operate in near secrecy. When journalists turn to unofficial sources, they court harassment or attack.

By Andrei Soldatov

When my colleague Irina Borogan and I founded the online security databank and news site *Agentura* in 2000, we hoped to fill the wide gaps in public information about the activities of Russia's secret services. We wanted to set up a Web site that collected and presented all publicly available information about these state agencies in an open and systematic manner.

Our initial idea was to create the Russian version of the Federation of American Scientists' Project on Government Secrecy. Directed by Steven Aftergood, a victorious plaintiff in U.S. Freedom of Information Act lawsuits against the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Reconnaissance Office, the project publishes a steady flow of documents disclosed under the act, including sensitive intelligence budget figures and secret acts.

Borogan and I soon understood that fashioning *Agentura* after the U.S. project was not going to work. For one, Russia does not have freedom of information laws so there would be no flow of declassified documents. Thus, we decided to stock *Agentura* mostly with media reports, although we've discovered that this stream of information is itself running low: Russian news media are pulling back on investigations, cutting budgets, and trimming staff. In the course of the past decade, experienced investigative reporters have been dismissed and investigation desks shut down.

The situation has been worsened by a gradual closing of the public domain—even the doors of agency press offices have been slammed shut. By the mid-2000s the Federal Protection Service allowed only photo-ops inside the Kremlin; the military intelligence directorate records, or whether the committee sought to recover any of those documents. The Investigative Committee did not respond to CPJ's request for comment.

On April 13, 2009, days after receiving the official decision to close the criminal case into Shchekochikhin's death, *Novaya Gazeta* pledged it would continue fighting for justice. "We have enough endurance and resolve," an editorial said. "We haven't forgotten anything or any one of those who obstructed this case for five years, and we haven't shut down our own investigation."

A brief investigation found no foul play in the March 2, 2007, death of Ivan Safronov, 51, a reserve colonel in the Russian Space Force and a respected military correspondent for the Moscow business daily *Kommersant*.

The journalist fell more than four stories from a staircase window in his apartment building, authorities and colleagues said. That day, Safronov had visited a Moscow medical clinic—where a doctor gave him good news about his ulcer treatment—gone grocery shopping, made plans with his family and friends, and taken a trolley back home, said Ilya Bulavinov, *Kommersant*'s deputy editor. About 4 p.m., two university students living in a nearby apartment building heard a thud, saw Safronov on the ground, and spotted a window open above him. Safronov's groceries were found scattered on the landing between the fourth and the fifth floor of his apartment building. He died at the scene.

The Taganka prosecutor's office in Moscow immediately ruled Safronov's death a suicide. Days later, authorities opened an investigation into possible "incitement to suicide" under Article 110 of the Russian penal code, suggesting that Safronov might have been provoked to jump by threat or abuse. By September, however, prosecutors had returned to their initial suicide theory, saying Safronov had ended his life for "subjective, private reasons" that were not disclosed. The conclusion appeared to be based largely on two

details: a security camera showing the journalist entering the apartment building alone; and statements from neighbors saying they had not seen or heard a disturbance before the death.

It was unclear why those two details were considered conclusive. No security camera, for example, recorded activity inside the building.

One thing seemed clear: Investigators did not seriously consider Safronov's journalism to be a possible motive for attack. A CPJ fact-finding mission, led by former Executive Director Ann Cooper, found that police never visited the offices of *Kommersant* or searched Safronov's notes and desktop computer. It was Safronov's colleagues, not investigators, who studied the details of his last phone conversations, questioned neighbors, and talked to his doctor. They passed on their findings to investigators, but the information generated little follow-up. Investigators finally conducted a handful of perfunctory interviews with colleagues, but editor Bulavinov said they seemed reluctant even to jot down the names of the government agencies that Safronov had covered.

Safronov had undertaken some sensitive assignments. In late February 2007, shortly before his death, Safronov had returned from Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, where he had covered an international gathering of defense manufacturers. Colleagues said the journalist had called the newsroom from Abu Dhabi with information about alleged sales of defense technology to Syria and Iran, which were purportedly channeled through Belarus to avoid Western criticism. Three days before his death, Safronov privately told colleagues at a news conference that he had been warned not to publish a portion of the information, *Kommersant* reported. He said he was told the Federal Security Service (FSB) would charge him with disclosing state secrets, the paper said. He did not say who had warned him.

The previous December, Safronov had embarrassed the Defense Ministry with an exclusive report on the third consecutive test failure of the Bulava missile, developed for deployment on a new

torate, Russia's largest intelligence agency, has no press office at all; the Foreign Intelligence Service has refused to comment on any of its activities after 1961; and the Center for Public Communications at the Federal Security Service (FSB) does not answer media requests.

In the early part of this decade, the FSB created a dizzying new bureaucratic structure that was ostensibly designed to provide public information but in practice issued propaganda. Here's how it worked: A Commission on Media Relations was created within the FSB Consultative Council, an advisory group consisting of current and former secret service officers. Yuri Levitsky, former foreign intelligence agent, was appointed chief of the Commission on Media Relations. Olga Kostina, a public relations officer who had worked for the now-dismantled oil company Yukos, was hired to coordinate the commission's work. The commission quietly disbanded after two unproductive years.

The names Levitsky and Kostina, however, did not leave the public spotlight. In 2004, Levitsky—who, apart from his FSB job, had his own private security company—was convicted of extortion. Kostina became one of the main prosecution witnesses against Yukos. Her testimony helped authorities build a case against Leonid Nevzlin, co-founder of the oil company, who eventually fled to Israel. In March 2005, a former security chief at Yukos was sentenced to 20 years in prison after being convicted of plotting an attempt to murder Kostina, along with two murders.

Those were stories that Borogan and I wanted to investigate. But if the police sometimes agree, albeit reluctantly, to disclose details about crimes in which its officers are involved, the FSB firmly refuses. In 2007, we were preparing a story about crimes committed by members of the security and intelligence services. Our official request to the FSB generated no response, so we turned to the Moscow Military Court, where crimes committed by security agents are

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supposed to be reviewed. Simultaneously, we sent a request to the Military Prosecutor's Office, which is responsible for the investigation of such crimes, asking for statistics. In response, an assistant to the military prosecutor wrote to us: "The required information, according to Item 3, Part 2 of Article 4 of the Law on State Secrets … contains state secrets and thus cannot be revealed." Alexander Beznasjuk, the chairman of Moscow Military Court answered: "The statistical data you are interested in about verdicts made with regards to military personnel ... are classified as 'Top Secret.'"

Thus, journalists must turn to unofficial sources to investigate crimes in which security agents might be complicit. This tactic can lead to accusations of divulging "state secrets," as happened to me in 2002 when I was interrogated four times by the FSB because of an article in which I questioned the agency's practice of exchanging business facilities for luxury apartments.

Worse, this secrecy can heighten the risk of physical attack. Based on our experience at *Agentura*, the nature of one's reporting dictates the potential for retaliation: To criticize an agency as a whole is safer than to target a particular officer. In most cases, an agency will retaliate through legal harassment. But the consequences can be much harsher if a disgruntled officer turns against a journalist. That's when physical reprisals can result—and, given the security structure's penchant for secrecy, those attacks are hard to investigate or prosecute. ■

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submarine. Without a reliable missile, the submarine would be rendered useless, Pavel Felgenhauer, military columnist for *Novaya Gazeta*, told CPJ. The Defense Ministry was so jittery that it ordered an internal investigation into the leak, according to press reports. Felgenhauer cited the Bulava story as a possible motive for Safronov's killing.

According to colleagues, family, and friends, Safronov had no "subjective, private reasons" to kill himself: He had no life-threatening illness, was expecting a grandchild, was preparing to send his son to university, had no large debts, was respected at work and loved at home, and appeared to be in good spirits. He left no suicide note.

A military correspondent, Safronov had been summoned for interrogation by the FSB at least a couple of times every year on suspicion that he had "divulged state secrets," his colleagues told CPJ. Neither defense nor FSB officials at odds with Safronov were ever questioned as part of the investigation.

On September 11, 2007, *Kommersant* was officially informed by investigators with the Moscow Central Administrative District Prosecutor's Office that the criminal investigation into Safronov's death had been closed because foul play could not be established. "In his professional activity, Ivan Safronov covered rather sensitive topics, but ones already covered by other information sources. With his publications, he hardly caused sufficient harm to anyone's interests, including those of the government," *Kommersant* quoted the prosecutor's statement as saying. Members of Safronov's family, including his widow, Yelena, had not been told the case was closed, *Kommersant* reported.

A day later, a frustrated Bulavinov wrote in *Kommersant*: "As far as I know, investigators never interrogated any official or manufacturer with whom Ivan Safronov had communicated. Obviously, the prosecutors were just not interested in his work, what topics he reported on, what questions he asked. We never found out what really happened to Ivan." ■

6 INVESTIGATING THE INVESTIGATORS:
When Police Are Suspects

Can President Medvedev halt attacks on the press without moving against corruption in law enforcement agencies? Two cases show how the issues are intertwined.

After taking office in 2008, President Dmitry Medvedev promised to fight official corruption and ensure the thorough investigation of journalist murders. Although Medvedev seemed to be addressing separate issues, corruption and attacks on the press have converged at times in Russia. Two unsolved cases stand out.

Maksim Maksimov, 41, disappeared in downtown St. Petersburg in June 2004 while reporting on alleged police corruption. Authorities, who have suspended their investigation, appear to have disregarded credible evidence that might implicate police officers in the disappearance. Magomed Yevloyev, 37, died from a gunshot to the head while in the custody of Interior Ministry officers in Ingushetia in August 2008. Investigators have concluded that an officer fired the fatal shot accidentally, but they have left numerous questions unanswered.

The cases illustrate the broader struggle to maintain the rule of law. In reversing impunity in attacks on the press, the Kremlin must also move aggressively against corruption in law enforcement agencies.

As a reporter for the St. Petersburg weekly *Gorod* and, before that, for the Agency for Journalistic Investigations (AZHUR), Maksim Maksimov was known for his stories on corruption in law enforcement agencies and the contract-style murders of local politicians. On June 29, 2004, he left the newsroom to meet a source in the city's downtown district and did not return, colleagues said. Two weeks later, St. Petersburg authorities opened an investigation.

Police looked into several leads, including a real estate deal and a potential car theft, Sergei Baluyev, *Gorod*'s chief editor, told CPJ. Within a few weeks, Maksimov's property, car, and savings had been found intact—but investigators conducted only a cursory review of the reporter's notes and his conversations with colleagues, Baluyev said.

By early 2005, AZHUR, a St. Petersburg organization that conducts in-depth news reporting, came up with a seemingly important lead. Yevgeny Vyshenkov, AZHUR's deputy director, told CPJ that he and his staff had interviewed two people who said they were involved in Maksimov's disappearance. At the time of his disappearance, AZHUR found, Maksimov had been looking into reports of corruption at a local Interior Ministry agency known as Operational Investigative Bureau No. 2. The story was far enough along that Maksimov had approached agency officers for comment.

Vyshenkov told CPJ he had interviewed a person who said he had been hired to lure the journalist to a local sauna under the guise of a "business meeting." The person told Vyshenkov that two Interior Ministry officers and two others were waiting at the sauna. After being ordered to leave the room, the person told Vyshenkov, he heard the men assault Maksimov.

Vyshenkov said he had also met with one of the assailants, an ex-convict, who told him that the men had strangled Maksimov, put his body in the trunk of a car, and driven in two vehicles to woods outside St. Petersburg. There, the two officers drove off on their own with the body and returned a half-hour later, Vyshenkov said he was told.

AZHUR presented its findings to the regional prosecutor's office. Vyshenkov said he had persuaded the front person and the assailant to tell prosecutors their story.

Nikolai Sirotinin, the Maksimov family law-

PUBLIC APATHY HAMPERS PRESS

Journalists and others who speak out against government abuses are on their own. If they are attacked or encounter legal trouble, they can hardly count on public support.

By Maria Lipman

Freedom of the press as an element of democratic policy is inseparable from political freedom and the mindset of the public. Media alone cannot make a difference if political authority is monopolized by leadership and the public remains fragmented and apathetic.

Not all Russian media are controlled by the state. While mass-audience outlets—first and foremost state TV channels—have been turned into propaganda tools, a number of smaller-audience outlets—print, Web, radio, even minor television media—pursue relatively independent editorial lines. Some of them do their best to expose abuse of authority by government officials; others focus more on critical analysis and angry opinion.

The Kremlin does not seek to stifle every voice, and it does not need to: In a tightly controlled political environment, independent media have no influence on policy-making and thus present no challenge to the government. Russian political opposition has been radically marginalized, and democratic checks and balances have been reduced to a façade. As long as there is no political freedom, the media function is reduced to the mere reporting of news, and the mission of public accountability cannot be accomplished.

The controlled political environment and the encroachment of the state on the public sphere—media included—are in themselves a problem. The atomization and passivity of Russian society make matters worse. The experiences of countries such as Yugoslavia under Slobodan Milosevic or Ukraine under Leonid Kuchma demonstrate that when people are driven and organized, opposition forces can make a difference, constraints on the media notwithstanding. But in Russia, even the advanced and critically minded audiences of alternative news outlets do not take action and do not seem to mind that the government keeps them from participating in national affairs.

There is virtually no experience with and no desire for social organization, and thus no public solidarity. The state traditionally dominates society, and the people do not regard themselves as a force that might try to hold the government to account. The result is ubiquitous abuse of authority, pervasive corruption, and contempt for the law.

The journalists, lawyers, or public activists who stand up to violations of justice and human rights or the abuse of office by government officials are on their own. Their effort is hardly appreciated by their fellow countrymen. If they get in trouble with government authorities, they can hardly count on public support or legal protection.

Russia has an abominable record of physical assaults and assassinations of journalists. And almost invariably, the assassins and the contractors of these murders are not caught or prosecuted. There's no doubt that journalists such as Anna Politkovskaya or Yuri Shchekochikhin, to mention just two cases out of too many, were slain because their disclosures got in the way of those with authority and wealth. In the past year alone, an alarming number of new names have been added to the sinister record of murdered or badly injured journalists, human rights advocates, and lawyers: Stanislav Markelov, Anastasiya Baburova, Mikhail Beketov, Vadim Rogozhin.

While there's no evidence that in any of the contract killings the assassins acted on orders from the Kremlin, the Russian government, which repeatedly manipulated court rulings in pursuit of political interests, bears responsibility for the lawless environment in which the perpetrators of these crimes act with impunity. Once justice has been corrupted by the executive branch, criminals and their sponsors can also buy protection from prosecution. Public indifference is part of the problem. A law-governed state will not take root in Russia until and unless there's an organized public demand for rule of law and accountability. ■

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yer and himself a former government investigator, said AZHUR's information was credible enough to warrant official investigation, but the prosecutor's office did not appear particularly interested in following up. Sirotinin told CPJ that investigators would not clarify what leads they checked.

A.V. Zaitsev, a senior official with the regional investigative committee, told CPJ in a written statement that his staff had indeed checked whether Interior Ministry officers were involved in the crime. He did not elaborate on what investigators had done or found. The two officers implicated in AZHUR's account were charged with forgery, false statement, and abuse of office in an unrelated case (they were later acquitted) but were not charged in the Maksimov case.

No concerted search for Maksimov or his body was undertaken until spring 2007, and that was at the insistence of the family. Sirotinin said he traveled to Moscow to persuade former colleagues in the Prosecutor General's Office to send a forensics team to assist. The search came up empty.

Sirotinin said his own requests to review the official case file were turned down. Russian procedural code gives investigators discretion to disclose details of an active probe to a victim's family and legal representatives; a family is entitled to access only when the investigation is formally finished. The investigation was suspended in 2008, according to Zaitsev, although it has not been officially closed, which would allow the family and its lawyer to review the file.

Maksimov's mother, Rimma, told CPJ that she has tried to persuade a number of officials to re-examine the case. Her most recent effort, in March 2009, was discouraging: A prosecutor told her "the case has no future." One aspect, however, has been settled. On November 30, 2006, at the behest of Maksimov's family, the Dzerzhinsky District Court in St. Petersburg declared the reporter dead.

Magomed Yevloyev, publisher of the independent news Web site *Ingushetiya*, had attracted considerable attention by the summer of 2008. His site, known as a reliable source of information in the tightly controlled southern republic, had reported on government corruption, human rights abuses, and a string of unsolved disappearances. In a June 2008 interview with CPJ, Yevloyev said authorities had retaliated by filing more than a dozen lawsuits seeking to close *Ingushetiya*. The region's two top officials at the time, President Murat Zyazikov and Interior Minister Musa Medov, had taken particular interest in shutting down the site, Yevloyev told CPJ. By August, the site's top editor had fled the country in the face of continuing threats.

So when the publisher and the president shared an August 31, 2008, flight from Moscow to the region's capital, Magas—and reportedly argued on the way—Yevloyev might have been anticipating difficulties. From the plane, Yevloyev sent a text message to a friend, one of about 20 people who had gathered at the airport to greet him, to say that "Zyazikov is flying with me." Before Yevloyev could disembark, Interior Ministry officers detained him and placed him in a UAZ vehicle headed toward the city of Nazran. Yevloyev was not handcuffed and did not resist, according to the journalist's friend, Magomed Khazbiyev.

Along the way, an Interior Ministry officer shot Yevloyev in the head. Within hours, authorities had declared that Yevloyev had been shot accidentally after he tried to seize a gun from one of three officers in the UAZ. The fatal shot happened to be fired by a second officer named Ibragim Yevloyev—a man ordinarily assigned to guard his uncle, Interior Minister Medov. (The officer is no relation to the victim.)

Astonished family and friends called the official account implausible, and they were not alone. As public outrage grew, Moscow intervened. On September 10, Aleksandr Bastrykin, head of the federal Investigative Committee in Moscow, or-

dered subordinates in Ingushetia to open an inquiry, although by calling the case negligent homicide, Bastrykin, critics said, appeared to predetermine an outcome. A month later, regional prosecutors reported that they had finished the investigation and that Ibragim Yevloyev would be charged with negligent homicide, the business daily *Kommersant* and the news Web site *Kavkazsky Uzel* reported.

But what kind of investigation was it?

Case documents obtained by CPJ indicate that investigators interviewed Ibragim Yevloyev on the day of the shooting. In his statement, the officer said the journalist was calm and was not handcuffed when he suddenly began to struggle with another officer. "It all happened in a matter of seconds," Ibragim Yevloyev said. "I had not yet turned to him all the way when Magomed Yevloyev abruptly leaned to the side and hit my gun, which at that very moment accidentally fired." A forensic analysis dated September 15, 2008, showed the journalist had been shot at point-blank range and that the bullet had pierced his temple.

Musa Pliyev, a former lawyer for the journalist's family, told CPJ it was unclear whether investigators had tried to re-enact the shooting. Neither was it clear that investigators had interviewed President Zyazikov or Minister Medov, who was at the airport when the plane arrived. The case documents show that investigators did try, unsuccessfully, to re-interview Ibragim Yevloyev. Minister Medov told investigators that his nephew and the other two officers in the UAZ (neither of whom have been identified) had been ordered by the Interior Ministry to leave the region, the case records show. Neither Zyazikov nor Medov responded to written questions submitted by CPJ in May 2009.

Public unrest prompted a shakeup in the regional leadership that fall. Zyazikov resigned in October and was subsequently named an adviser to President Dmitry Medvedev. Medov was reassigned to Interior Ministry headquarters in Moscow in late 2008, according to news reports. But the criminal case has gotten off to a slow start. Ibragim Yevloyev, who was also reassigned to Moscow, did not attend initial court proceedings on his negligent homicide charge. Lawyers for the officer have been quoted in news reports as saying that the case must be moved outside Ingushetia to ensure their client's safety.

In January 2009, the Ingushetia Supreme Court ruled that there had been no legal basis to detain the journalist in the first place. (He was purportedly being held as a witness in a criminal investigation into an explosion.) The following month, an Interior Ministry investigator acknowledged in a letter to the new president, Yunus-bek Yevkurov, that he had signed the warrant for Magomed Yevloyev *after* the journalist had already been detained and shot, *Kommersant* reported. No charges will be filed in that case, Ingushetia prosecutor Yuri Turygin announced in March. ■

7 THE ROBBERIES: *Reaching for a Dubious Motive*

Investigators in two cases are quick to classify slayings as the product of street crimes such as robberies rather than probe more sensitive motives.

The extent of deadly reprisals against journalists in Russia is understated in official records. Foul play is ruled out in some cases; work-related motives are ignored in others. In two glaring cases, investigators were quick to determine that journalists had been slain in common street robberies unrelated to work.

In each case, the evidence shows the assailants were strangely uninterested in valuables carried by the victims. Gold jewelry, a diamond ring, and cash were left behind. And in each case, investigators spent little time checking work-related leads, examining the victims' published work and notes, or interviewing colleagues.

Natalya Skryl, 29, and Vagif Kochetkov, 31, were killed three years and hundreds of miles apart in cases that were classified as robberies and unsuccessfully prosecuted. The cases have grown cold, and the victims' families have been left dispirited and fearful. In one case, a relative who had sought a more thorough investigation said she was warned to stop speaking out.

Shortly after 10 p.m. on March 8, 2002, Natalya Skryl was walking from a bus stop on her way home from a party. A business reporter for *Nashe Vremya* in the city of Rostov-on-Don, Skryl lived with her parents in Taganrog, an industrial city on the Azov Sea. Lately, she had been reporting on the struggle for control of the Taganrog-based company Tagmet, a large manufacturer of steel pipes.

A man who approached from behind struck Skryl a dozen times with a pipe or similar heavy object. Her screams alerted neighbors, who found her lying in a pool of blood, local press reports said. She was immediately taken to a hospital but died the next day, her body so disfigured that her father did not recognize her. The assailant, described by witnesses as a young man with long black hair, did not take the money in Skryl's purse or her gold jewelry, her family told CPJ. There was no evidence, in fact, that anything had been taken.

Skryl had written several articles about a fight over management of Tagmet. By March 2002, the two-year-long dispute had reached its peak: An alternative board of directors was seeking to oust the management; armed guards were deployed around the plant; the director had virtually barricaded himself inside. Taganrog at the time was in the midst of a wave of privatization, and times were turbulent. "There was big money to be divided among interested parties," *Nashe Vremya*'s top editor, Vera Yuzhanskaya, told CPJ in a 2005 interview. Many prominent people were turning up dead that year, she said. A court official was found shot in his office; a well-known businessman and a police official were found dead in what were termed suicides; the mayor was gunned down next to his house.

The day she was attacked, Skryl told a colleague she planned to meet a source for the Tagmet story. "Natalya didn't say who the person was, but she mentioned that he was supposed to pass her more detailed, confidential information about Tagmet," said Irina Khansivarova, an editor who sat near Skryl in the newsroom. Aleksandr Pestryakov, another colleague, said Skryl's coverage had become increasingly detailed and critical around the time of her death. Skryl, he said, "had her finger on the pulse" of Tagmet.

Officials in the Taganrog prosecutor's office initially ruled out robbery as a motive because Skryl's jewelry and money had not been taken. Five days after the slaying, the Taganrog police announced that they had three suspects in custody. But the three were soon released, and the investigation seemed to take a turn. In late July 2002, police announced that robbery was the

IN THEIR WORDS

"The recognition, observance and protection of the rights and freedoms of man and citizen shall be the obligation of the State. … Everyone shall have the right to life. … Everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of ideas and speech."

—Constitution of the Russian Federation, Articles 2, 20, and 29

"For our country … the issue of the persecution of journalists is one of the most pressing. And we realize our degree of responsibility in this. We will do everything to protect the press corps."

—Vladimir Putin, then president, at a news conference in the Kremlin's Round Hall, February 1, 2007

"These crimes are politically related and often are contract-style. … Large numbers of unresolved murders committed in recent years reflect the inadequacies of the investigative bodies in the beginning and during the later stages of the investigation."

—Aleksandr Bastrykin, head of the Investigative Committee of the Prosecutor General's Office, to *Novaya Gazeta*, May 15, 2009

"Each of them should be examined in detail and the criminals should be found and prosecuted. This is the only way to change the situation."

—President Dmitry Medvedev, responding to a question about attacks on journalists, on the BBC's "Andrew Marr Show," March 29, 2009

"As long as journalists are not able to freely carry out investigations, Russia cannot be considered a truly free country."

—Michael Klebnikov, brother of slain editor Paul Klebnikov, to Agence France-Presse, October 10, 2006

motive after all and that the crime was not related to Skryl's work, the Ekho Rostova radio station reported at the time. No explanation for the switch was offered.

Grigory Bochkaryov, a former colleague, told CPJ that investigators never questioned Skryl's co-workers in any depth and did not issue a composite drawing of the suspect. Khansivarova told CPJ that an investigator had spoken with her once—for about two minutes, she estimated. She volunteered that Skryl had planned to meet a source for the Tagmet story, but the information generated no follow-up from investigators.

By September 2002, Taganrog authorities closed the investigation for lack of suspects, Yuzhanskaya told CPJ. Nearly three years elapsed with no evident change in the case before authorities responded to queries from press freedom groups by issuing contradictory statements.

In a June 10, 2005, letter, the Prosecutor General's Office told the Moscow-based Glasnost Defense Foundation that investigators in Taganrog had suspended the case after exhausting every lead. The next month, after CPJ convened a Moscow conference in which relatives and colleagues of several slain journalists voiced frustration with law enforcement efforts, Russia's top prosecutor issued a different statement. The investigation in Skryl's case "continues," the prosecutor's office said in a July 11, 2005, response to a CPJ inquiry.

But not actively, at least not anymore. CPJ's 2009 requests for comment on the status of the case were passed among three different investigative offices, including the Rostov Investigative Committee. In July, committee official S.G. Martynenko said in a written statement that active work on the case had been suspended. He did not elaborate.

Nellya Skryl, the reporter's mother, told CPJ that authorities were not communicating with her either—and, disturbingly, she said she was afraid to speak in detail about the case. That reflected a notable change from 2005 when Skryl took part in

the CPJ conference and talked openly about the ineffective investigation into her daughter's slaying. Along with other participants, she signed a public declaration that called on Russian authorities to solve the spate of journalist murders.

Speaking to a CPJ reporter in April of this year, Nellya Skryl said: "I was warned that while I have living relatives, not to interfere in this case. I don't want to interfere, because I'm afraid for my relatives. If I were asked, I would say: Close this case and everyone will be safer." She declined to say who had warned her. Then, she added: "Anyway, they won't investigate [the killing]. If the state supported the victims, it would have been interested in the swift apprehension of the killers. … But nobody is interested in that. [Television anchor Vladislav] Listyev was killed; [Anna] Politkovskaya was killed. And what? The killers have not been found, and they won't ever be. And these are famous people, unlike my Natasha."

At about 11 p.m. on December 27, 2005, Vagif Kochetkov, a political reporter for the newspaper *Molodoi Kommunar* in the city of Tula, headed home after meeting friends at a coffee shop. He was to go on a business trip in the countryside the next day and needed to pack, Aleksandr Yermakov, *Molodoi Kommunar*'s editor, told CPJ. As Kochetkov approached his home, at least one assailant struck him on the head with a blunt object and took his bag and cell phone; his money and a diamond ring were left behind, according to press reports and CPJ sources. The bag, Kochetkov's stepfather, Yuri Baikov, told CPJ, contained the journalist's passport, press card, credit card, and work-related documents. (A caretaker found the bag three months later in the basement of a nearby apartment building. It contained everything but the documents, Baikov said.)

Neighbors found Kochetkov lying unconscious on the ground around 2 a.m. on December 28. They revived the reporter and helped him walk home. Kochetkov did not seek immediate medical attention

"In a city of millions, filled with the video cameras, security services, bodyguards and other such structures that are supposed to guarantee people's safety, killers feel more confident than citizens."

—Valery Yakov, editor-in-chief of the Moscow newspaper *Novye Izvestiya*, in a January 23, 2009, commentary. The piece ran four days after journalist Anastasiya Baburova and human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov were murdered.

"He never tried to hide his fear. He never even said that he was not afraid. He used to say that he could not do it any other way."

—Olga Lapitskaya, widow of slain editor Aleksei Sidorov, to *The Washington Post*, October 24, 2003

"I have open eyes and this is the real part of my job—to write and to travel and to take risk. I am not happy when someone wants to poison me or beat me or kill me. It is a risk, but it is reality."

—Anna Politkovskaya, in an interview with *The Herald* of Glasgow, October 22, 2004

"The Russian president made clear that everything would be done to solve this crime. ... I think this is very important and a necessary sign that the freedom of those who report and write is an important aspect of countries where democracy is developing."

—German Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking about the Politkovskaya murder at a press conference with Vladimir Putin, October 10, 2006

"We understand that the murder was organized at a very high level by those who were bothered by Politkovskaya's articles."

—Karinna Moskalenko, lawyer for the Politkovskaya family, in *Novye Izvestiya*, February 17, 2009. Three defendants were acquitted in the killing that month. ■

or report the attack to the police; he would not tell his parents whether he recognized his attacker.

When Kochetkov sought treatment at a hospital the next day, doctors diagnosed two hematomas and said his condition was not life-threatening, Baikov told CPJ. But on January 1, 2006, Kochetkov's health began to deteriorate. He underwent brain surgery on January 5, fell into a coma, and died three days later. An autopsy showed he had suffered a skull fracture, a concussion, multiple chest bruises, and other injuries, according to press reports and CPJ interviews.

Kochetkov's parents, Yuri and Valentina Baikov, reported the attack on January 7, 2006, and Tula police opened a criminal investigation. Two days later, police said they had a suspect.

On April 3, 2006, Tula prosecutors announced they had completed their investigation, determined Kochetkov's death to be the product of a robbery, and filed robbery and manslaughter charges against Yan Stakhanov, 26, a Tula man with a criminal record for assault who was vaguely described in local press reports as a businessman. Investigators did not question Kochetkov's colleagues about his recent work assignments, nor did they look at the reporter's computer or notebooks for leads, family and colleagues told CPJ. Although Kochetkov had worked on sensitive issues before his murder, authorities appeared uninterested in his reporting.

Just before the attack, Kochetkov wrote an article in *Trud*—a Moscow newspaper for which he was a local correspondent—on the activities of a Tula drug-dealing gang. The December 16, 2005, article was headlined, "Revenge of the Mafia?" In a June 17, 2005, article for *Molodoi Kommunar*, Kochetkov criticized the business practices of Protek, a pharmaceutical company in Tula.

Journalists at *Molodoi Kommunar* told the Moscow-based news Web site *Newsinfo* that Kochetkov had received telephone threats in connection with his reporting. But both family members and colleagues said Kochetkov generally kept specific concerns to himself.

The trial of Stakhanov opened on April 17, 2006, in the Proletarsky District Court in Tula. Stakhanov was said to have confessed to the killing during the preliminary investigation but said later that police had coerced his statements, local press reports said.

Coerced or not, Stakhanov's statements contained discrepancies, according to Yuri Baikov, who was the family's official legal representative at the trial. Stakhanov initially claimed that he had hit Kochetkov once, had taken a mobile phone and bag, and had thrown the bag into a local river; in a subsequent statement, he said he had hit Kochetkov multiple times, taken his phone, and thrown his bag into a basement nearby.

Even if Stakhanov were a plausible suspect, Baikov said, common sense would suggest that someone else had ordered the attack. "I don't believe this man attacked my son so he could take his cell phone," Baikov told CPJ in April. "This man can afford to hire two lawyers to defend him, has a job, a car, and he gets tempted by a cell phone? … But police immediately said that the case was a mere robbery. No other versions were considered," Baikov said. Among other gaps in the probe, he said, was that investigators never examined the computer hard drive his son used at home.

In April 2008, Judge Andrei Shmakov found Stakhanov not guilty, ruling that the prosecution had presented insufficient evidence.

In the months after Stakhanov's acquittal, Baikov filed unsuccessful appeals with the Tula Regional Court and the Supreme Court. In November 2008, he traveled to Moscow to meet with Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika and deliver a letter addressed to President Dmitry Medvedev, asking for a new investigation. In April of this year, Andrei Ponomaryov, a senior official in the Tula prosecutor's office, told reporters at a news conference that his agency would reopen the case. "It has now become apparent that the real criminals have evaded responsibility," Ponomaryov said. ■

8 THE TOGLIATTI MURDERS:
'They Can't Kill Us All'

Valery Ivanov and Aleksei Sidorov were friends and colleagues, a pair of crusading editors out to expose crime and make a splash in Russia's car-making capital. They were murdered 18 months apart.

Journalists investigating alleged corruption among prosecutors, judges, and police officers face a difficult question: Can they afford to alienate the very officials responsible for protecting them? The murders of successive editors of *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*—a newspaper that exposes crime and corruption in the Volga River city of Togliatti—highlight the grave risks of examining possible connections between criminal gangs and law enforcement officials.

An industrial city of 700,000 about 600 miles (950 kilometers) southeast of Moscow, Togliatti is home to a 1,500-acre assembly plant for AvtoVAZ, the country's largest carmaker. In the early 1990s, ethnic gangs fought battles in the streets to get a toehold at AvtoVAZ, where billions of rubles could be made stealing parts and cars, skimming profits, and extorting protection money from car dealers. Valery Ivanov and Aleksei Sidorov met during this violent, freewheeling era. Students at a teachers college in neighboring Samara, Ivanov, 21, and Sidorov, two years younger, worked together at the school newspaper during the 1990-91 academic year, according to Terry Gould, a Canadian journalist who investigated the murders of the Togliatti editors for his 2009 book, *Marked for Death: Dying for the Story in the World's Most Dangerous Places.*

It was an exciting but chaotic time for journalists. They were free to expose criminal gangs and corrupt bureaucrats, but they did so without state financial subsidies and the state-imposed stability of the Soviet era. In 1993 and 1994, Ivanov and Sidorov wrote about local crime and corruption for tabloids in Samara and Togliatti, *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* reported in an account of its history. Ivanov had even bigger ambitions: He spent much of 1995 seeking funding to start his own paper, eventually opening a car dealership and travel agency and funneling the profits into a bold new publication, *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*.

"The newspaper was set up to conduct investigations, to find political, social, and criminal issues and unravel them," Stella Ivanova, the editor's sister, recalled in an interview with CPJ. The first monthly issue of *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* came out just before the September 1996 municipal elections. Despite a burglary at their office in which equipment and documents were taken, the editors put out a newspaper full of critical candidate portraits, Gould recounted. It caused a local sensation.

As the paper's popularity and advertising grew, Editor-in-Chief Ivanov and Deputy Editor Sidorov hired a team of tough-minded reporters to produce exposés on crime and corruption. The aggressive reporting earned the paper powerful enemies and led to death threats, libel suits, and occasional questioning by police and Federal Security Service officers seeking to identify the paper's sources, staff members said in interviews with CPJ.

In the 2000 municipal election, Ivanov won a seat on the Togliatti city council, where he was appointed chairman of a committee looking into potentially rigged city contracts, according to press reports. He was not above using his political position to further his reporting. With Ivanov's access to internal government documents, *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* reported in December 2001 that the city was paying above-market gasoline prices for its buses even as the bus drivers were going unpaid, Gould recounted. The article sparked a political crisis as bus drivers went on strike and Av-

NO PLACE FOR JUSTICE

In a manufacturing city divided in two, corruption and violence find a home, but justice struggles to find a place.

By Ann Cooper

Togliatti is a divided city. Its Soviet fathers wanted it that way—the ultimate manufacturing metropolis, planned to a fare-thee-well, with a giant green zone plunked in between its industrial and residential areas. It might have made some sort of manufacturing sense, but for the people on the ground, it means driving, driving, driving—back and forth through that Soviet-developed forest linking the urban halves. Inevitably, wherever you are in Togliatti, the next place you need to be is an hour away, on the other side of the green zone where the two-lane roads are choked with thousands of Ladas manufactured at the city's ancient AvtoVAZ plant.

I was instantly and acutely aware of the city's physical division when I arrived in Togliatti in 2004 on a CPJ research mission. Less obvious at first was the city's other, deeper divide—the one between the old, rigid, repressive Soviet system and the new Russian world of nascent democracy and free speech. It was the clash between these two worlds that had brought us to town.

Two editors from the same newspaper had been killed: Valery Ivanov in 2002; Aleksei Sidorov just 18 months later. The editors and their paper were very much of the new world: young, daring, bursting with post-Soviet optimism when they founded *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* in 1996. In a city paralyzed by mob-style violence, they shied away from nothing.

Along with Alex Lupis, then CPJ's regional program coordinator, I spent many hours with people from the new world: Ivanov and Sidorov's families and their colleagues, frightened but still at work putting out the toVAZ workers couldn't get to their jobs.

By 2002, Ivanov's stewardship of *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*, then a daily, led him to believe that corrupt public officials played the most significant role in the local crime scene, Gould wrote in an extensive account of the case. Ivanov's reporting focused increasingly on alleged financial links between local politicians and criminals, colleagues told CPJ, causing them to become ever more fearful for his safety. In April, Ivanov was looking closely at allegations that local law enforcement officials had pocketed the assets of reputed gangster Dmitry Ruzlyaev, who was slain in 1998, *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* journalists told CPJ. He never finished the article.

On April 29, 2002, as Ivanov was getting into a car outside his home at about 11 p.m., an assailant shot him multiple times in the head at point-blank range, according to local press reports.

Eyewitnesses saw a man in his mid- to late 20s walk up to Ivanov's car and shoot him, using a pistol apparently fitted with a silencer, and then flee on foot, press reports said.

Authorities initially said they were examining Ivanov's government work, his journalism, and a purported business rivalry as potential motives. "Prosecutors and police worked actively on the case, in my opinion, for a very short time, about two to three months," Yelena Ivanova, the editor's widow, told CPJ. "I think they weren't very interested in solving the case."

Investigators soon focused on an alleged business-related plot, *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* journalists told CPJ. Authorities alleged that a rival media company had commissioned a criminal gang leader to eliminate Ivanov, and the gang leader had in turn delegated the job to another man, according to press reports and CPJ interviews. After Ivanov's murder, the official version went, the killer died of a drug overdose. No one was charged.

"They tried to blame the murder on some dead drug addict," Rimma Mikhareva, former deputy

editor of *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*, told CPJ. After conducting its own research, she said, the paper concluded that the government's assertions were not credible.

A year later, with no evident activity in the investigation, Ivanov's family members sought a meeting with Yevgeny Novozhilov, a Samara deputy prosecutor who was handling cases in Togliatti at the time. Relatives told CPJ that Novozhilov was unwilling to discuss details. In a 2004 interview with CPJ, Novozhilov said he was under no obligation to disclose such information. The Togliatti prosecutor's office did not respond to written questions submitted by CPJ in June 2009.

Karen Nersisian, a lawyer representing Ivanov's family, told CPJ that he formally sought access to the investigative file three times between 2004 and 2006 but was denied. Russian procedural code gives investigators discretion to disclose details of an active probe to a victim's family or legal representatives. "We never found out which potential versions of the crime they investigated—or whether they did anything at all," said Nersisian, who would later represent the Sidorov family in similarly tragic circumstances.

Sidorov replaced his slain colleague, vowing to complete Ivanov's unfinished article, find the editor's killers, and continue the newspaper's aggressive reporting. After all, Sidorov told *The New York Times*, "They can't kill us all." By fall, he started receiving death threats and was concerned enough that he hired a bodyguard and twice left Togliatti for short periods, colleagues told CPJ. Still, Sidorov pushed ahead with the paper's investigative work, exploring alleged criminal ownership of local businesses and charges of judicial corruption, colleagues and family members told CPJ.

He also continued working on Ivanov's unfinished investigation, eventually pursuing financial documents that he believed would link law enforcement officials to Ruzlyaev's missing assets, newspaper. The paper had grown cautious; the families were bitter at the lack of justice. Those were sad meetings—almost therapy sessions—in which we did our best to find some words of comfort and hope.

When we left the newspaper offices and the homes of the editors' families, we entered another Togliatti—the official world that was supposed to solve the murders, bring the killers to justice, and make Togliatti safe for watchdog journalism.

We never found a world that fit that description. Instead, we were confronted by officials who still seemed to be living in the Brezhnev-era Soviet Union. The mayor, Nikolai Utkin, agreed to meet, then sent word that he was "too busy," the universal excuse of officials unwilling to speak about sensitive issues.

We did meet Sergei Korepin, the investigator in charge of the Sidorov murder. Korepin's office had built a flimsy case against a factory worker, who was on trial during our visit on charges of fatally stabbing Sidorov with an ice pick. The murder happened, according to Korepin's office, in a random street encounter between the two men. The purported motive: Sidorov refused the stranger's entreaties for vodka.

Despite the preposterous plot line, Korepin assured us his office had the killer. It was just a "hooligan" murder, he said, nothing to do with Sidorov's hard-hitting journalism. And no, he told us, he was not interested in interviewing two witnesses who had come forward with an alibi for the factory worker. Why, he asked, didn't they come forward sooner?

We encountered a similar attitude when we met with Yevgeny Novozhilov, the region's deputy prosecutor. Novozhilov had been a prosecutor for 32 years, meaning most of his experience was in the Soviet era. He acknowledged that he wasn't used to talking with the press—and definitely not with advocates like us.

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In Novozhilov's view, journalists should not write about trials at all until a verdict is rendered; a story about the outcome, and a few details, would serve the public just fine. Novozhilov spent a lot of our talk offering opinions about the news media. In his view, journalists would do best just to wait for officials to hand out press releases, and then report them more or less verbatim—which is pretty much what journalists did in the Soviet era.

The divide could not have been more clear. If Ivanov and Sidorov embodied Russia's new democratic hopes, Novozhilov represented the authoritarian system that still controlled the institutions of justice. We left uncertain that justice would ever be done in the Togliatti editors' cases.

Four months later, a local judge acquitted the factory worker and called the prosecution's case untenable. Korepin's tidy solution in the Sidorov murder had been exposed as a sham. There was still no real justice. But at least those who tried to mock it were denied their own cynical victory. ■

***Ann Cooper**, former executive director of CPJ, is coordinator of the broadcast program at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.*

colleagues told CPJ. On the evening of October 9, 2003, Sidorov told a colleague he had received an important batch of documents and was prepared to finish the article, according to local press reports. Documents in hand, he went home to meet guests.

As Sidorov walked toward his apartment building at about 9 p.m., several witnesses said, two men followed while a third stabbed the editor several times in the chest and quickly searched him, according to local press reports. Sidorov bled to death in the arms of his wife, who had heard his calls for help and rushed down to the building's entrance. By then, the assailants were gone and the documents were missing.

Police and prosecutors initially said Sidorov's murder appeared to be a contract killing in retaliation for his work, but they soon changed their public position and labeled it a random street crime. On October 12, 2003, local police detained Yevgeny Maininger, 29, a welder at a local factory, and interrogated him for three days, according to Sidorov's colleagues. The prolonged questioning produced a confession. Novozhilov, the prosecutor, told local reporters that an intoxicated Maininger stumbled upon Sidorov that evening, appealed for some vodka, and then murdered the editor in a rage when he was rebuffed.

Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye Editor-in-Chief Sergei Davydov, who had worked under Ivanov and Sidorov, told CPJ he believes local authorities were under political pressure to classify the slaying as a street crime. "The investigators and local law enforcement officials got a nonverbal, but firm message to stick to the 'street crime' version until the end of the case," he said. Added Vladimir Sidorov, the victim's father: "Many witnesses were not fully questioned; newspaper articles and computer files were practically ignored."

Dismissing skepticism from Sidorov's family and colleagues, prosecutors charged Maininger with murder on October 21. The defendant didn't

stand by his confession very long: In November, Maininger retracted his statement and said it had been coerced. Nersisian, the lawyer for the victim's family, pointed to other details that undercut the prosecution as the case unfolded over the next year. Maininger's co-workers, for example, said police had tried to pressure them to testify that they saw the defendant with the purported murder weapon the day before the killing. Eyewitnesses were uncertain whether Maininger was the murderer; their accounts consistently pointed to a killer who was taller than the defendant.

On October 11, 2004, Judge Andrei Kirillov acquitted the 29-year-old Maininger, saying the prosecution's case was untenable. After the acquittal, Nersisian told CPJ, he requested that prosecutors in Moscow unify the Ivanov and Sidorov cases and re-investigate them at the federal level, where the inquiry would be less susceptible to political pressure. His requests were rebuffed, he said. The Togliatti prosecutor's office did not respond to written questions submitted by CPJ in June.

Although authorities have reported no further progress in either case, they have appeared, at times, to have harassed *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*. In early 2008, after the paper endorsed an opposition mayoral candidate, staff members found themselves fending off an unscheduled tax compliance inspection and a raid in which police confiscated all 20 newsroom computers. Officers said the computers had to be checked for counterfeit software.

Mistrust of local law enforcement officials is high enough, colleagues of the slain editors say, that new witnesses could be deterred from coming forward. "Even if someone knows who ordered the crime, they won't report it officially," said Davydov, the editor-in-chief. ■

9 THE DEADLY CAUCASUS: *Reporting at Extreme Risk*

Journalists have been silenced for covering Chechnya and its neighboring republics, Dagestan and Ingushetia. Opaque investigations into the killings have fed deep skepticism.

The North Caucasus has been a treacherous place—and a potentially deadly topic—for independent journalists. CPJ has documented dozens of cases of harassment and attacks committed by all sides against journalists in Chechnya, where two wars have raged, and its neighboring republics, Dagestan and Ingushetia, beset by outbursts of violence.

But the ultimate method of silencing journalists and other critics has come from the barrel of a gun. As many as seven journalists may have been targeted for murder since 2000 because of their reporting on the region. Preceding chapters have recounted the cases of Paul Klebnikov, Anna Politkovskaya, and Magomed Yevloyev.

Journalists Vladimir Yatsina, Magomedzagid Varisov, Telman Alishayev, and Anastasiya Baburova also covered developments in the region, and they, too, were murdered. Authorities say they have identified several suspects in these cases—and have killed some—but colleagues and relatives of the journalists are deeply skeptical about the official handling of these cases. They are troubled by the opaque nature of the investigations, the contradictory public statements made by authorities in some instances, and the general failure of investigators and prosecutors to communicate with even those closest to the victims.

In mid-July 1999, Vladimir Yatsina, 51, took a leave from his job at the Russian news agency ITAR-TASS and traveled to the North Caucasus on a freelance assignment to photograph Chechen fighters encamped in Ingushetia. According to press and family reports, Yatsina traveled with Magomed Uspayev, an ethnic Chechen and Moscow university student, who was to be his fixer.

Heidi Hollinger, a Canadian photojournalist, had passed along Uspayev's name to Yatsina, according to her lawyer, Nicolas Plourde. Hollinger told Yatsina that she did not know Uspayev well and that his credentials should be verified, the lawyer said in a written statement to CPJ. Hollinger had no other contact with either man, the lawyer said.

After the photographer and fixer landed at an airport in Ingushetia, news reports said, Uspayev handed Yatsina to members of the Akhmadov clan, a criminal gang notorious for kidnappings, and went on the run. A month later, kidnappers called Yatsina's wife and sought US$2 million in ransom, a demand they later made to ITAR-TASS as well. Neither the family nor the agency paid the sum, and the Russian Interior Ministry would not negotiate with the kidnappers.

In late February 2000, two former captives told Russian prosecutors they had seen Yatsina's body in the mountains of Chechnya, Amnesty International reported. A Kazakh national, Alisher Orozaliyev, whom Chechen kidnappers had held hostage at the same location as Yatsina, said the gang members had killed the journalist while retreating from the Russian army. On February 20, a group of hostages was being transferred to the village of Shatoi, Orozaliyev said at a press briefing shortly after his release. "Yatsina had health problems—he had bad feet, couldn't walk any longer, although only five kilometers remained. The rebels shot him dead. We arrived in the village and were to stay there. But then bombing started and we had to go down into the forest. On the way back, we saw his body."

Yatsina's wife, Svetlana Golovenkova, told CPJ that she and other family members learned of the death from television news reports. It was a stunning way to get the news for Golovenkova, who said she had personally appealed to 20 different officials for help in the case. All had promised to

keep her informed of developments, she said.

After the captives gave their statements, the Interior Ministry sent a special forces unit to recover Yatsina's body. The unit retrieved remains from the site where Yatsina was believed to have been killed, but tests later showed that they belonged to an animal, *Novaya Gazeta* reporter Vyacheslav Izmailov, a veteran of the region, told CPJ.

While the armed conflict in Chechnya might understandably impede efforts to arrest Yatsina's killers, no such obstacle seemed to stand in the way of questioning Uspayev, who was reportedly seen in Moscow in the months after the abduction. Uspayev remained in the country until 2002, when he fled to Sweden under an assumed name, according to Izmailov, who reported on the case and who once served as a military officer in the North Caucasus.

In correspondence with Golovenkova in 2002 and 2003, local prosecutors said they were aware Uspayev had fled the country. But it wasn't until 2005—after Golovenkova had filed a formal complaint with the Prosecutor General's Office in Moscow—that authorities placed Uspayev's name on Interpol's international wanted list.

In October 2006, Swedish police arrested Uspayev, who was then using yet another name, on a disorderly conduct charge and asked their Russian colleagues to confirm his identity, according to local reports. His identity verified by Chechen prosecutors, Russian authorities filed a request for extradition on charges related to the abduction and killing, according to prosecutors. In October 2007, the Swedish government rejected the extradition request, saying it feared that an ethnic Chechen would not get a fair trial in Russia, according to prosecutors and press reports.

In a June 12 statement, the Swedish Prosecutor General's Office told CPJ it is conducting its own investigation into Uspayev's alleged role in the case. The prosecutor's office said it is also examining whether it could bring its own criminal case. Uspayev could not be located for comment.

'WHO NEEDS YOUR TRUTH?'

A veteran reporter in the region describes how authorities censor the news through intimidation.

Fatima Tlisova, former North Caucasus correspondent for The Associated Press, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and other news outlets, knows well the grave risks facing reporters in the region. In August 2007, she offered this gripping testimony to the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe:

"More than 10 years I worked as a correspondent for different newspapers and agencies in the North Caucasus, the land between the Black and Caspian seas in southern Russia. …. Russia has been using in this region military policies that are very close to genocide. I can describe those policies as massive and regular violations of human rights, even the basic right to life.

"This is the truth that the Russian government tries to hide. And the best way to hide information is by destroying the freedom of speech and the independent press. The most famous Russian journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, was murdered only for one reason—for her job in the North Caucasus, for telling the truth.

"I don't need to tell you the statistics of freedom of speech in Russia. These numbers are very familiar to all who are interested in the situation. … There are dozens of stories beyond the statistics, stories that remain unknown. I want to tell you only one of these stories, about a friend of mine. …

"When he started to work as a correspondent for one of Russia's central newspapers, he never used his legal name; he used only pseudonyms. He started to write articles that were very different from the others appearing in the official press. His stories were full of details. They were mirrors

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of what was really happening in his region. He wrote about kidnapped young people, about murdered or tortured civilians who were called terrorists after their deaths.

"Then, only after a few weeks, he suddenly disappeared. I tried to call him. His cell phone was switched off. No one in his family had any idea where he could be. On the second day, the news of his abduction came. Someone saw the man being kidnapped near an Internet café by masked militants. …

"I was on my way to his town when he called me. His voice was changed. At first I couldn't understand who was calling from his cell phone. He said, 'Do not come, please. I will be soon in your city.' A few hours later, in the evening, we met in a café. He was very angry and sad. He used the paper napkins on the table to write down for me what had happened. He could not speak about it because he was very afraid. Five or six masked men kidnapped him. …

"He was brought to a neighboring town. After arriving, they left him in a small room, and all his guards disappeared. The door was locked. There was only one table and two chairs in this room. He heard men's voices screaming like wild animals. …

"Then, two men came in wearing civilian clothes. They did not hide their faces, and they showed him IDs. Both of them were FSB officers. They asked him how he became a journalist. Their tone was smug and superior. 'There are dozens of journalists in your region, but only a few of them were here like you.' … They put all his articles, signed by different pseudonyms, in front of him on the table. …

"He tried to explain he wrote only the truth. They were laughing. 'Who needs your truth? You must write what you must, nothing more.' These questions lasted until midnight. Then they left him alone for the night. The next morning, he received instructions. Every time he wrote something for the cen-

According to press reports, many of the Akhmadov brothers who led the criminal gang were killed during the Chechen conflict. One, Ruslan, was arrested in 2001 in Azerbaijan and extradited to Russia, where he was sentenced to 10 years in prison for other crimes. Authorities have disclosed no information on what role, if any, the Akhmadov brothers played in Yatsina's murder.

Magomedzagid Varisov, 54, a political analyst for Dagestan's largest weekly, *Novoye Delo*, and head of a think tank, the Center for Strategic Initiatives and Political Technologies, was shot in a contract-style assassination on June 28, 2005. At least two unidentified assailants fired on Varisov's car near his house in Dagestan's capital, Makhachkala, killing the journalist and wounding his driver, according to press reports. Varisov's wife, who was also in the vehicle, was unharmed. Police said they collected 24 bullet casings from the scene.

Several sources told CPJ that Varisov appeared to have been targeted for his writing, which was critical of many people across the political spectrum. In his *Novoye Delo* column, Varisov examined the spread of militant Islam and scrutinized human rights abuses committed by federal forces in the region. In particular, the journalist examined a recent Russian army sweep in the Chechen border town of Borozdinovskaya, which resulted in the killing of one civilian and the disappearance of several others. Days before his murder, Varisov told the German paper *Berliner Zeitung* that Chechen authorities were unable to control their own territory and were responsible for the spread of violence to Dagestan. Chechen guerrillas easily cross the border into Dagestan, he told *Berliner Zeitung*, which published its article the day Varisov was shot.

A local Islamist group, Shariat, claimed responsibility for Varisov's murder, calling him a mouthpiece for the Kremlin and the "Dagestani

puppet regime" in a statement published on its Web site. Ten days later, police ambushed and killed Ruslan Makasharipov, the group's reputed leader, and announced that he was a suspect in Varisov's murder and a dozen other crimes.

The next year, on April 10, 2006, police gunned down another man they called a suspect in the slaying. Press reports said police in Makhachkala exchanged gunfire with a man named Makhach Rasulov while trying to apprehend him. Rasulov, a one-time colleague of Varisov at *Novoye Delo*, died at the scene. Press reports described Rasulov as a former government interpreter who had become a follower of Wahhabism, a conservative form of Sunni Islam.

Authorities have not made public any evidence to support assertions that the two men were involved in Varisov's murder. The suspects' precise roles in the slaying have not been spelled out; neither is it clear whether any other people were involved in the killing. Prosecutors told CPJ in February 2007 that the Varisov case had been closed.

The journalist's son, Varis, said he is skeptical of the official account. Varis Varisov, himself a government investigator with the Dagestan Investigative Committee, said a statement from a detained Chechen guerrilla had purportedly connected Makasharipov to the murder. But Varisov said he found inconsistencies between the statement and details of the killing. He said he asked his colleagues to restart the investigation, but it was to no avail. The case will be solved, Varisov said, "only if, by miracle, we discover something new." The Dagestan prosecutor's office did not respond to CPJ's April 2009 request for comment.

Telman Alishayev, 39, a reporter and a host for the Makhachkala-based Islamic television channel TV-Chirkei, covered social issues such as education, AIDS, and drug addiction from a religious perspective, his colleagues told CPJ.

On September 2, 2008, two unidentified as-

tral newspaper, he must first send it to them for checking. Once a week he must come to meet with the officer who will work with him. …

"These official methods I described are not unusual, but the most useful methods are much more simple. … Your 16-year-old innocent son can be arrested. Your house and your parents' house can be searched any time they want to. … You can be [removed] from the list of journalists who have access to official information, or who are allowed to attend official press conferences. You can be barred from working for foreign news agencies because the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will never give you the accreditation. And without accreditation, your work is illegal.

"If you didn't become flexible after all, you can suddenly die or be publicly executed, as happened to Anna Politkovskaya. These are my observations after 10 years' work as a journalist in the North Caucasus region of Russia." ■

sailants shot Alishayev as he was returning home in his car. He died at the hospital the next morning. Several CPJ sources said the slaying was likely prompted by a 2006 documentary that Alishayev produced, "Ordinary Wahhabism," which criticized the conservative form of Sunni Islam and its spread in the republic. The business daily *Kommersant* reported that Alishayev received threats shortly after the film was released, and that one Islamist group had placed his name on an online "death list."

Two days after the attack, investigators identified two suspects: Vadim Butdayev and Rustam Umalatov, reputed members of a local Wahhabi group. Butdayev was also wanted in connection with the murder of a police officer in Makhachkala that occurred earlier the same day, local press reports said. The Dagestan Interior Ministry said witnesses had identified Butdayev as the gunman; it did not specify Umalatov's role.

Butdayev never stood trial. On November 17, 2008, Interior Ministry officers seeking to arrest Butdayev and three other men in Makhachkala exchanged gunfire with the suspects and killed all four, the news agency RIA Dagestan reported. Umalatov's whereabouts are unclear. Dagestan prosecutors did not respond to CPJ's written request for comment on the status of the inquiry.

The journalist's brother, Akhmad, told CPJ that he doubts there was any genuine investigation in the killing. "They named the suspects the day after the murder—and there was nothing after," the brother said. Authorities never informed the family about developments in the case, he added.

Novaya Gazeta reporter Anastasiya Baburova, 25, was shot around 3 p.m. on January 19, 2009, on a downtown Moscow street within walking distance of the Kremlin. She had just covered a news conference at which prominent human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov fiercely denounced the early prison release of a Russian army officer convicted in the March 2000 abduction and murder of a Chechen girl. The lawyer and journalist left the Independent Press Center, where the news conference was held, and were chatting as they strolled outside.

An unknown assailant wearing dark clothes and a ski mask followed the two, shooting Markelov in the back of the head with a pistol fitted with a silencer, *Kommersant* reported, citing sources in the Prosecutor General's Office. Baburova apparently tried to stop the killer as he strode past, prompting him to shoot her in the head, *Kommersant* reported, citing witnesses. Markelov, 34, died at the scene. Baburova died several hours later in a Moscow hospital.

A journalism student at Moscow State University who freelanced for *Novaya Gazeta*, Baburova had contributed reports on neo-Nazi groups and race-motivated crimes since October 2008, Deputy Editor Sergei Sokolov told CPJ. She had earlier written for the state-controlled daily *Izvestiya*, covering business topics.

Officials offered a mixed response in the aftermath. "The brazenness of this crime indicates that the killer was sure of his impunity," Aleksandr Bastrykin, chairman of the Investigative Committee of the Prosecutor General's Office, declared in a statement two days after the murder. "Society ought to be sure that the law works in this country and that no one is permitted to break it." But the response from President Dmitry Medvedev was muted. His private condolences to the newspaper, offered about 10 days after the killings, generated little news coverage.

The investigation itself seemed to move in fits and starts. On January 23, Vladimir Pronin, then-head of the Moscow City Directorate of Internal Affairs, told a news conference that police had recovered three bullet casings and a bullet from the crime scene, the news agency Interfax reported. Three days later, Viktor Biryukov, a spokesman for the agency, told *Izvestiya* that no such evidence had been found. ■

10 A (LIMITED) SUCCESS: *Landmark Convictions Won*

Guilty verdicts in the killing of Igor Domnikov show that persistence can lead to justice. But critics say the case, successful as it has been, remains far from complete.

In August 2007, five members of a notorious criminal gang were convicted of murdering Igor Domnikov, a reporter and special-projects editor with the independent, Moscow-based newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*. They were sentenced to prison terms varying from 18 years to life for the Domnikov slaying and numerous other crimes. The convictions are the only ones obtained in the work-related murder of a journalist in Russia since 2000, according to CPJ research.

The verdicts followed years of work by Domnikov's colleagues, who meticulously investigated the murder and doggedly lobbied for prosecution of the suspects. *Novaya Gazeta* staffers and Domnikov's representatives talked to witnesses, police, and suspects to advance the investigation, digging out information and following the trail left by Domnikov's articles. Though satisfied that the killers are behind bars, these colleagues are now pushing for the prosecution of those alleged to have ordered the murder of Domnikov in May 2000. If successful, the newspaper would help establish an important precedent in fighting impunity in journalist murders in Russia—by bringing both assassins and masterminds to justice.

Although *Novaya Gazeta* is known for hard-nosed investigative reporting, Domnikov, 42, built his reputation on the cutting wit and acerbic tone that he brought to profiles and features. "His articles were spirited and spun with talent," a colleague, Vyacheslav Izmailov, said. "Tired of all that criminality, *Novaya*'s readers would allow themselves to catch their breath and wind down with Igor's publications."

In the months before his death, Domnikov took special interest in the Lipetsk regional administration in western Russia. In 1999 and 2000, he wrote five first-person pieces highly critical of Gov. Oleg Korolyov and his finance deputy, Sergei Dorovskoi. He accused the regional government of driving farmers into bankruptcy by not stimulating the agricultural sector; engaging in nepotism; failing to control violent crime; and allowing the population to wallow in poverty while top officials drew high salaries.

In one article, Domnikov used his sardonic style as a rapier against Dorovskoi, accusing the deputy of cozying up to Lipetsk businesses and using his office to benefit family and friends. Domnikov ended his piece by calling for an official investigation into the deputy's actions.

Sergei Sokolov, *Novaya Gazeta* deputy editor, said that the content of that and other articles probably irritated regional officials, but it was Domnikov's acid style that really offended them. Domnikov, for instance, mocked the deputy governor for authorizing ice cream stand sales without the use of cash registers. "Even those who don't know a lot about trade in Russia will raise their eyebrows, unbutton the top of their shirts, and say after a moment of silence, 'Wow, such a daring guy! I bet you he will be the boss in prison.'"

So insulted was Dorovskoi, *Novaya Gazeta* reported, citing its own research and investigators' records, that he allegedly enlisted a business associate, Pavel Sopot, to bring Domnikov back to Lipetsk so they could talk. The conversation between Sopot and Dorovskoi took place in April 2000, a month before the attack, according to *Novaya Gazeta*'s Izmailov, who interviewed Sopot. "Civilized persons seek redress for their hurt honor and dignity by filing a defamation claim in court or writing to the prosecutor," Izmailov said in a July 14, 2005, *Novaya Gazeta* article. "But Dorovskoi chose a different approach."

Sopot, *Novaya Gazeta* said, was a longtime

A MEASURE OF JUSTICE

The prosecution did outstanding work in the Domnikov case, but it stopped far too short, a human rights lawyer says. The problem is systemic.

Karen Nersisian, a prominent human rights lawyer based in Moscow, represented Igor Domnikov's family during the investigation into the journalist's murder and the ensuing trial of criminal gang members based in Naberezhnye Chelny. In April, CPJ spoke with Nersisian about the case.

You represented the Domnikov family during the investigation and trial. What was your role?

I had to make certain that those charged with the murder were indeed the killers, that the investigation was conducted fairly and objectively, and that the masterminds were being sought. I traveled to Naberezhnye Chelny, studied the materials of the criminal case, and interviewed several of the suspects. I managed to persuade one such person to cooperate with the prosecution. You know, to get the case solved, sometimes one has to use untraditional methods.

What led to a positive outcome?

The very fact this organized crime group was one of the most dangerous and bloody ones in Russia helped. And thanks to the media, thanks to the attention of the international community, we received extensive publicity. The authorities were under pressure; the investigation into Domnikov's killing was being covered worldwide.

This was also a political move for Russia, a chance to demonstrate to the world that it can solve crimes against journalists, that it can bring at least one case to the end. Well, of course, later on it became clear that the masterminds had found a way to influence the process and circumvent justice. But at least in the beginning, things looked optimistic.

friend and a former business partner of Eduard Tagiryanov, the now-imprisoned head of Tagiryanovskiye—a well-organized, heavily armed, and highly efficient criminal group blamed for more than 20 murders, eight kidnappings, and a number of other crimes across Russia. Tagiryanovskiye were based in the city of Naberezhnye Chelny in the west-central republic of Tatarstan. Sopot used to live in Naberezhnye Chelny, and, though he had moved to Moscow several years earlier, retained his ties with Tagiryanov, *Novaya Gazeta* said. "Did the sole fact that [Sopot] lived in Moscow prompt Dorovskoi to approach him with this request (or order?) or did Dorovskoi know of Sopot's, let's say, special connections?" Izmailov wrote.

Sopot told Izmailov—in a tape-recorded conversation—that two weeks after his April 2000 visit with Dorovskoi, he met Tagiryanov at a Moscow restaurant and asked him for advice on how to handle journalists. Tagiryanov's gang, as it turned out, did more than give advice.

Whether or not events went exactly as *Novaya Gazeta* described, what happened next is beyond dispute.

On May 12, 2000, around 8 p.m., at least one assailant attacked Domnikov in the entrance of his Moscow apartment building, bashing him on the head with a hammer. The bloodied weapon, wrapped in a cloth, was later found near the crime scene, *Novaya Gazeta* reported, citing forensic records. A neighbor found Domnikov bleeding and barely conscious and called an ambulance. The journalist was hospitalized and underwent surgery, but he fell into a two-month-long coma and died on July 16 of head injuries. He never regained consciousness.

More than six years and 124 volumes of investigative material later, the trial of 16 Tagiryanovskiye started in Supreme Court in Kazan, the regional capital of Tatarstan. Among the 23 mur-

ders for which the gang members were charged was that of Igor Domnikov. In an article published September 7, 2006, three days after proceedings opened, *Novaya Gazeta* thanked the investigators, prosecutors, and police officers who had worked on the case. Noting that it "often rebukes our law enforcement agencies for their shiftlessness and corruptibility," the paper said the prosecution was a "significant achievement" by "wonderful professionals" who had risked their lives in pursuit of justice.

A year later, on August 26, 2007, Judge Ildus Gataulin convicted five defendants in the Domnikov murder and several other crimes, sentencing each to a lengthy prison term. (The 11 other defendants were also convicted and jailed for crimes that included murder, kidnapping, extortion, and robbery.) Albert Khuzin, charged with striking Domnikov with a hammer, received 25 years behind bars. Gennady Bezuglov, accused of planning the logistics of the crime, got 18 years. Gang leader Eduard Tagiryanov was sentenced to life in prison for his role in the killing and other crimes. Two other Tagiryanovskiye—Sergei Babkov and Nikolai Kazakov—were convicted of conducting surveillance of Domnikov before the attack. Babkov was sentenced to life and Kazakov to 19 years. All are serving their terms in a high-security prison colony, according to press reports.

So what made this case different from so many others in which the prosecution failed? For one, the Domnikov killing was part of a much larger, years-long crime spree committed by one of the bloodiest organized crime groups in Russia. Across the law enforcement bureaucracy, there was a strong commitment to move aggressively against the group. But *Novaya Gazeta*, with the help of press freedom groups, also worked long and hard to keep the case in the spotlight. Karen Nersisian, a former lawyer for the Domnikov family, said public awareness remains a powerful tool in the fight against impunity.

How do you evaluate the work of government investigators?

In the preliminary stages, I was confident that both killers and masterminds would be brought to justice because the investigation was carried out diligently. I was sure the investigation was tracking the real killers and had the right culprits in custody. In the very beginning investigators were working absolutely professionally, but it was clear that they were under high pressure in the closing stages.

When the case went to trial, it became clear that there was an order not to touch the masterminds. We were not given any chance to ask questions about the masterminds once the trial started.

And the head of the criminal group, Eduard Tagiryanov, he was at all times sticking to the point that it was all his responsibility, that it was only his initiative to kill Domnikov—though he had no apparent motive—and that no one had ordered him to do so.

This case once again proved that masterminds in Russia are untouchables. If these are big officials, big powerful people, they will always find a way to cover their tracks. Our Russian laws find their most merciful application when it comes to this group of people.

What are the key problems in the judicial system?

The judiciary is not independent. If judicial power was indeed independent, laws would have been applied equally, not selectively. There is no uniform standard of applying the laws in Russia.

The psychology of the powerful is that justice must serve them. It has always been this way. The justice system itself behaves as if it exists only by the mercy and under the patronage of the powerful. It will take much work to change this psychology. This won't happen overnight. We need new people, new mentalities, new approaches. ■

If pleased by the convictions, *Novaya Gazeta* was nonetheless critical of Tatarstan prosecutors for not opening a criminal case against Sopot and Dorovskoi. Both men gave pretrial statements to investigators, and Sopot testified during the proceedings. Prosecutors considered the men witnesses in the case and did not allege any criminal wrongdoing.

In an August 29, 2007, commentary, *Novaya Gazeta* special correspondent Yelena Milashina insisted that investigators had given in to political pressure in declining to pursue the inquiry further. Sokolov, *Novaya Gazeta*'s deputy editor, told CPJ that the paper, along with Domnikov's family and their lawyers, filed appeals seeking a criminal investigation into Sopot and Dorovskoi. Prosecutors and investigators at both regional and national levels rebuffed each request, Sokolov told CPJ.

But persistence finally yielded some results. On April 17, 2009, almost nine years after Domnikov's death, *Novaya Gazeta* received word from the Investigative Committee in the Central Federal District that it had opened a criminal inquiry into Sopot at the direction of top Investigative Committee officials. The new probe does not include Dorovskoi, who left politics to run a meat-processing plant and several other businesses in Lipetsk. The Investigative Committee did not respond to CPJ's written request for comment on its decision.

In the interview with *Novaya Gazeta*, published September 7, 2006, Sopot said he did not believe his conversation with the gang leader would result in Domnikov's killing. He told the paper: "If I said something about you to someone and then something happened to you—would that really be my fault?" Dorovskoi has not publicly addressed questions about the case. CPJ attempted to contact him though his meat-processing business but did not receive a reply. Tagiryanov, the gang leader, did not implicate either man in the slaying, said Nersisian, lawyer for the journalist's family.

The decision to investigate Sopot came four days after President Dmitry Medvedev met with *Novaya Gazeta* Editor Dmitry Muratov and gave the newspaper an exclusive interview. Presidential press secretary Natalia Timakova described Medvedev's gesture as a way of expressing "moral support" for the publication.

Novaya Gazeta staffers remain skeptical. "I would not start talking about any positive results yet," Sokolov told CPJ. "A criminal case can be closed just as easily as it was opened." ■

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee to Protect Journalists makes the following recommendations to Russian authorities and the international community in the interest of reversing the record of impunity in journalist deaths in Russia.

RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES

To President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin

- Condemn publicly and unequivocally all acts of violence against journalists as crimes not only against citizens, but against the public's right to be informed. Meet with victims' families and acknowledge the government's failure to protect their loved ones' right to life and its inability to bring the murderers to justice.
- Commit all of the resources of your offices to bringing the perpetrators of these crimes to justice. Declare absolute intolerance of corrupt elements in law enforcement that sabotage investigations into journalist deaths. Hold such people accountable for their actions under the law. Demand regular progress reports from your subordinates in Russia's investigating agencies. Instruct those agencies to make progress reports public.
- Publicly restate your recognition of the important role independent news-gatherers, investigative journalists, and critical commentators play in Russian society. Allow independent journalists to repopulate the public space.

To the Prosecutor General and the Investigative Committee

- Communicate regularly with the relatives of the slain journalists. Allow relatives and their legal representatives full, unfettered access to investigative case files.
- Assign new, unbiased investigators in cases in which conflicts of interest have hampered probes. Where conflicts of interest dictate, transfer cases from current jurisdictions to neutral ones.
- Reopen all closed investigations and restart investigations that are technically open but dormant in practical terms. Pursue unchecked leads, seek out and question witnesses, track down and detain wanted suspects. Where professional motives have been dismissed without sufficient investigation, focus attention on the victim's journalism.
- Ensure that vigorous investigative work is being done in each case by requiring regular, specific progress reports from subordinates at the district and regional levels.

To judicial authorities

- Open court proceedings in journalist killings to the public and the press. Ensure jurors and witnesses are protected from intimidation.
- Demonstrate independence from political, corporate, criminal, and other external pressures. Review and, where appropriate, reverse questionable, unfair, or unexplained judicial decisions.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

To European institutions

- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, of which Russia is a member, should ask Russian authorities to fully comply with OSCE principles regarding free expression. It should fully support the work of its Representative on Freedom of the Media and relay to Russian authorities concerns expressed by this representative.
- The Council of Europe, of which Russia is a member, should scrutinize Russia's compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular Article 10 regarding free expression, and take appropriate action to promote compliance. It should direct the council's Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out a mission on impunity in Russia and produce a report to be submitted to the council's Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. The commissioner should hold public meetings in Russia on attacks against journalists and assist Russian authorities in enhancing human rights and legal institutions to address impunity.
- The Council of Europe should ensure Russia fully complies with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights regarding free expression. In the event Russian authorities fail to take appropriate action, the council should use enforcement mechanisms up to suspension of Russia's membership.
- The European Union should instruct the EU Mission in Russia to monitor closely the situation of press freedom and apply to Russian journalists EU guidelines on human rights defenders.
- The European Parliament, and in particular its Subcommittee on Human Rights, should closely monitor the press freedom situation in Russia and hold a public hearing on press freedom, attacks against journalists, and impunity in Russia.

To leaders in the United States

- In bilateral and multilateral meetings, engage Russian leaders on human rights, press freedom, and impunity. Offer assistance and cooperation to combat impunity.
- The U.S. Congress, including the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, should hold public hearings on press freedom, attacks on journalists, and impunity in Russia.

To the U.N. Human Rights Council

- Hold Russia accountable to international human rights standards. Review in an expedient manner the human rights grievances of Russian citizens. Issue sanctions when violations are proved.
- The Human Rights Council should task the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression to investigate the press freedom situation in Russia and report the findings and recommendations to the council and other relevant U.N. institutions. ■

APPENDIX I

Excerpts from the work of journalists slain in Russia since 2000.

Paul Klebnikov
"The Golden Hundred:
Russia's Richest People of 2004"
By Paul Klebnikov and Kirill Vishnepolsky
(Originally published in *Forbes Russia* on May 13, 2004; translated and republished by *Forbes.com* on July 22, 2004)

…

While Russian capitalism may be highly dynamic, it can hardly be called well developed—one symptom of that is the extraordinary concentration of capital. The combined net worth of *Forbes Russia*'s "Golden Hundred" is $136.9 billion. In the autumn of 1996, [tycoon Boris] Berezovsky declared to the *Financial Times* that he and six other individuals controlled 50 percent of Russia's economy. Berezovsky was exaggerating, but there was more than a grain of truth in his words. Today, much of that concentration of capital remains. According to the World Bank, Russia's 23 largest business companies (almost all of them are present on our list) account for 57 percent of the country's industrial production.

Russia has more billionaires in proportion to gross domestic product than any other major economy—36 individuals in relation to a GDP of $458 billion. Though it would be wrong to correlate net worth to GDP (the former is a question of capital, the second of revenue), comparing the two gives an indirect indication of the degree of concentration of wealth in a country. The fact that the combined net worth of Russia's 36 billionaires ($110 billion) is equivalent to 24 percent of GDP speaks volumes.

When *Forbes* published its most recent list of the world's billionaires, in February of this year, the U.S. was the undisputed leader in the number of billionaires. The combined net worth of America's 277 billionaires was $651 billion—equivalent to 6 percent of America's GDP of $11 trillion. The second-highest number of billionaires could be found in Germany—52 billionaires in a country with a GDP of $2.1 trillion. And Japan, with the world's second-largest economy and a GDP of $3.7 trillion, counted fewer billionaires than Russia—only 22 people.

Russia's capital is not only concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group of individuals, it is also highly concentrated in one part of the country—the city of Moscow. According to *Forbes* estimates, all but three of Russia's 36 billionaires either live in Moscow or have made their fortunes in companies based in the city. No other city in the world can boast such a number of homegrown billionaires—even New York could boast only 31 billionaires, according to the latest *Forbes* list of the world's billionaires.

Inherited wealth
When we calculate the fortunes of the wealthiest Americans—those included on the "*Forbes* 400" list—we consider whether the bulk of an individual's fortune is inherited or not. The fact that inherited fortunes account for just 20 percent of the "*Forbes* 400" speaks of the ability of the U.S. economy to reinvent itself rather than to rely simply on the achievements of past generations.

Naturally, since Russia emerged from communism just 13 years ago, one cannot speak of inherited family fortunes. But most of the members of *Forbes Russia's* "Golden Hundred" list have inherited natural resources and enterprises of an entire country—the Soviet Union. This kind of inheritance forms the basis of the net worth of 66 members of our list. Only 34 individuals made their fortunes by starting some fundamentally

new business—mostly in the telecommunications sector, construction, and food and beverage production, or by the creation of retail chains. The scarcity of new sources of wealth in Russia indicates to what extent the Russian economy still relies on the achievements of the past.

Finally, the members of *Forbes Russia*'s "Golden Hundred" list are remarkably similar in terms of biography and personal characteristics. The average member of our list is a 47-year-old male who was born outside Moscow but received his higher education in the Soviet capital. With the legalization of private trading in 1988, the typical member of the "Golden Hundred" made a small fortune importing personal computers. Several years later, he branched out into banking and raw material exports. Today, he typically owns a majority stake in an oil or metal company. He is married and spends a good part of the year in Western Europe or North America, where he settled with his wife and children in the late 1990s.

…

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Anna Politkovskaya
"Designated Terrorists: The Anti-Terrorist Policy of Torture in the North Caucasus"
(Originally published in *Novaya Gazeta* on October 12, 2006; translated by Yelena Leonova and republished on October 13, 2006, in *Johnson's Russia List*, a project of the World Security Institute)

Every day, there are tens of folders in front of me. These are copies of materials from criminal cases against people who are being investigated or have already been jailed for "terrorism."

Why is the word "terrorism" in quotation marks here? Because the overwhelming majority of these people are designated terrorists. By 2006, the practice of designating people as terrorists has not only displaced any and all real anti-terrorist efforts, but has actually started to generate revenge-seekers—potential real terrorists. When prosecutors and courts do not work to carry out the law and punish the guilty but, rather, to fulfill political orders and achieve anti-terrorist statistics pleasing to the Kremlin, such criminal cases turn out like hot cakes from an oven.

The conveyor belt of "organizing full confessions" excels at providing good statistics on "fighting terrorism" in the North Caucasus.

Here is what the mothers of a group of young convicted Chechens wrote to me: "In effect, these penitentiaries have turned into concentration camps for Chechen convicts. They are subjected to ethnic discrimination. They are not allowed out of one-person cells or punitive solitary confinement. The majority, or almost all of them, have been convicted on fabricated charges, with no material evidence. Held in brutal conditions, subjected to humiliation, they are developing a hatred for everything. This is a whole army of young men who will return to us with their lives ruined, their outlooks distorted. …"

To be honest, I fear their hatred. I fear it because it's like a river that will overflow its banks sooner or later. And it will be taken out on everyone—not just the investigators who tortured them. The "designated terrorist" cases are the arena where there's a head-on clash between two ideological approaches to what is happening in the zone of the "counter-terrorist operation in the North Caucasus": Are we using the law to fight lawlessness, or are we hitting "their" lawlessness with "ours?"

…

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Eduard Markevich
"Expansion"
(Originally published in *Novy Reft* on January 12, 2000; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

I decided to write this article after learning about a search in the apartment of [Alevtina Nikolaevna] Urusova, a sports instructor at the [Reftinsky] town administration.

I had to meet with a lot of people in order to carefully investigate this case and be able to give you an adequate account of what had happened. What I learned has changed my perception of things I have ignored in the past.

...

One evening the police broke into A.N. Urusova's apartment without a warrant, turned everything in the apartment on its head, and confiscated sports equipment she kept at home. ... A.N. Urusova was called for an interrogation. The interrogation lasted for eight hours, and was accompanied by threats, tears, loss of consciousness, and the arrival of an ambulance.

It turned out that the police were not very interested in A.N. Urusova herself. … And all that ostentatious strictness of the "siloviki" [law enforcement and security agents], and their zealous intent to fight against "those who steal social property," was nothing more than a sham. All that was needed from the sports instructor was to name the names of the persons and list the quantities of the bribes they allegedly passed through her to the head of the town administration, M. Shantarin. They also wanted her to name the places and the dates those alleged transactions took place. Moreover, they demanded that she sign some papers compromising to Shantarin.

To her credit, Alevtina Nikolaevna [Urusova] withstood the pressure and did not succumb to threats (of the "I'll put you in jail!" type) or to the temptation of saving herself from police harassment by confirming false accusations against an innocent man.

…

According to unofficial sources, the police have been blackmailing M. Shantarin by threatening to put his son in prison on fabricated charges. This is an alarming fact: The police are becoming interested in politics. And not just in Reftinsky. The recent expansion of the "siloviki" into the federal government is noticeable: First, Russians, exhausted by failed reforms, were forced to vote for the political party Unity, headed by [army general] Sergei Shoigu; then, the tendency continued at the executive level when V. Putin—a "silovik" to the bone—became president.

Feeling the support of the federal government, our detectives have raised their heads, striving for power and influence in the local administration.

A police officer does not have much of a chance of being elected to office—people do not like the police, and that's that. Particularly here in the Urals—a region for ages used by Moscow as a dumping ground for inconvenient, dissenting citizens. So, the direct path to political power is shut to police officers here. Now, it is another matter if a high-ranking town official has sons who can get into trouble. … It is not that hard to influence the powerful by preying on their parental feelings.

…

No one is allowed to destroy the foundations of democracy in our country, even in a small town, even in the name of some good cause. Those in uniform have always used raw force as their main argument.

But we are not going to stand by, doing nothing, while the police are trampling one of the most valuable achievements of our country—our democracy—before our eyes.

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Yuri Shchekochikhin
"The Three Whales [Furniture Store] Case: A Judge Threatened, a Prosecutor Dismissed, a Witness Murdered"
(Originally published in *Novaya Gazeta* on June 2, 2003; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

…

This is not a story about tables and chairs; this is a different, a completely different story, which points directly to Russia's place in the world, to the kind of country we live in, to the history we are currently writing, to our elected president and parliament, and to our politically appointed government officials.

The Three Whales case is symbolic of our time! Symbolic for the parliament—its Security Committee dedicated an entire session to the affair, and the State Duma sent dozens of letters to the Prosecutor General's Office. Symbolic for Europe and America—authorities over there have already arrested the Western business partners of Three Whales, but their inquiries for information sent to our Ministry of Internal Affairs and Prosecutor General's Office have been left hanging. Symbolic for our rule of law—just do not tell me fairy tales about the independence of judges or that "only a court can convict a person!" Until we have a fair trial in this case, files will be destroyed, witnesses intimidated or murdered, and as for investigators—they will either be [wrongfully] convicted or will leave, upset in their efforts to break the wall. We have a criminal case opened against [wrongfully accused investigator] Zaitsev, we have a criminal case opened against customs officials [who first sounded the alarm in the Three Whales affair], but where is the criminal investigation into the multimillion-dollar smuggling that took place?

It sounds like a joke! The independent presidential prosecutor Loskutov has strangely not received a letter from Frank Helmut, the German criminal police representative in Moscow. The letter directly names the dummy German companies established by [Three Whales principal] Zuyev; lists Zuyev's accomplices who—along with him—are suspected of money-laundering and creating a criminal organization; and informs the Russian side of Italian arrests made in the matter, as well of the German authorities' readiness to collaborate with Russia on this case!

He doesn't have this letter; it has not arrived, or it has been lost, or it has just disappeared in the corridors of the Prosecutor General's Office. I can give him a copy of the letter, but will it make any difference? And this is not the point! The question is: What is really in the power of our elected president to do? To provide some senior citizen with a telephone line? To utter some pretty sentence in German? To take off in a fighter jet [as a photo op]?

"Who is he, Mr. Putin?" I hardly remember how many times I have heard this question from my foreign colleagues when he suddenly appeared at the top of Russian political power. Three years have elapsed since then. And I still haven't found a clear answer to this question.

Twice I have appealed to the president with personal inquiries regarding, believe me, important state issues. Twice I have had to repeat the same phrase: "I understand your desire to create a working team, but it seems to me not a team but a pack of wolves has been circling around you. And Russia is tired of living under this ruling pack." Twice, in response, I have received meaningless notes from Kremlin clerks.

…

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Ivan Safronov
"The Bulava Missile Failed"
By Ivan Safronov and Elina Bilevskaya
(Originally published in *Kommersant* on December 26, 2006; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

Kommersant has learned that the test of the modern intercontinental ballistic missile Bulava, which was launched on Sunday from the Dmitry Donskoi nuclear submarine, was unsuccessful. This is Bulava's third consecutive crash. The problems associated with launching Bulava cast doubts on future plans to supply the nuclear navy with this kind of missile. Bulava was expected to become the main striking force of the Russian navy's strategic nuclear forces in the next decade.

According to *Kommersant*'s sources, at the end of last week, the Dmitry Donskoi submarine went to sea in order to launch Bulava. Yesterday, the submarine came back to the base in Severodvinsk. The launch of the missile was scheduled for Sunday, but no official announcements have been made. It's worth pointing out that the Defense Ministry always makes official statements following the successful launches of ballistic missiles. Sometimes, Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov personally reports the successful launches to President Vladimir Putin in front of TV journalists. A *Kommersant* source in the Joint Staff of the Navy Fleet noted that after Bulava's previous launch failure on October 25 (incidentally, this was the day of the president's annual televised conference with the Russian people), the distribution of any information about the missile test was banned.

Yesterday, Igor Panarin, the press secretary of the Federal Space Agency (responsible for the creation of Bulava), neither confirmed nor denied information about the failed missile launch. He promised *Kommersant* that "the agency would comment right after the Defense Ministry issues its official statement." However, the Defense Ministry was mute until yesterday evening. The head of the communications department of the Defense Ministry, Sergei Rybakov, told *Kommersant* then that he "is not commenting on the situation" with Bulava's launch. According to Second Rank Captain Igor Babenko, the deputy head of the Northern Fleet's press service, the responsibility for everything that takes place around the Bulava missile launch lies entirely on the developer—the Moscow Institute of Combustion Engineering. "The military does not have a right to comment on anything related to the tests of this missile until the missile is transferred to the fleet for service," Babenko told *Kommersant*.

After the failed Bulava launches in September and October 2006, the testing program was changed. While both tests in the fall were carried out with the Donskoi submarine under water in the White Sea, the December 24 launch was done with Donskoi above water. However, the third attempt to launch Bulava within the last four months failed, too, according to the information obtained by *Kommersant*.

We will remind you that after three failed attempts to launch the navy's modernized nuclear missile Bark in 1997, the Russian Security Council decided to terminate its development by the Makeev assembly plant. It was decided that work would be transferred to the Moscow Institute of Combustion Engineering, which would have to develop a modern nuclear missile that would then be produced by the Votkin factory in Udmurtiya. The Moscow Institute of Combustion Engineering had previously developed land-based ballistic missiles for the strategic-missile military force.

According to a *Kommersant* source in the Defense Ministry, an intergovernmental commission was to start an investigation today into the Bulava launch failure. In addition, the source did not deny the possibility that the results of the work of the commission could be examined at a special meeting of the military-industrial commission led by Vice Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov. "The failure casts doubts on carrying out the state military program to equip the Russian navy with the Bulava missile starting in 2007," the source explained.

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Maksim Maksimov
"They Beat Their Own and Fear No One"
(Originally published in *Gorod* on April 5, 2004; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

In the period of one week, the apartment of an investigator with the Main Department of Investigations [in the St. Petersburg Interior Ministry] was broken into twice, in both cases by police officers. Strange that this may be, in both cases, the Central Federal District's prosecutor's office found no criminality in the police actions, and refused to open a criminal case into the matter. However, the investigator (we will call her N for safety concerns) did not agree with the prosecutor. Last week, the Smolninsky Federal Court of the Central Federal District held a hearing to review N's appeal, and ruled that the prosecutor's decision was illegal and unfounded.

Colleagues and bandits

Here is N's account of the events. On February 19, 2004, about half an hour after midnight, unknown men smashed the front door and broke into her apartment. One of them, in response to her question, "What's going on?" aimed a pistol at her stomach and ordered her to "shut up." This event reminded her of an armed assault. Only after a uniformed police officer came through her door did investigator N realize that the men were not criminals, but her colleagues.

N showed her police identification, introduced herself, and asked her uninvited guests to do the same; she also asked them to explain the reason why they broke into her home. But, in response, all she received was a torrent of vulgarities. No one showed her any documents. One of the men said that "the deputy of the Regional Department of Internal Affairs Solovykh is working here," and if she kept complaining, she would be taken to police station No. 76. The investigator once again asked that the men leave her apartment. When they were leaving, one of them kicked her in the stomach.

N then saw the police officers break into a neighboring apartment, which was rented by a Chechen-Azerbaijani family, take the people out on the street—without allowing them to even put their jackets on—and drive them away. The investigator dialed 02 [the emergency phone number] right away. The police team that arrived refused to take down her account of the break-in and only filled out some form.

The same day, N filed an appeal with the city prosecutor, asking him to open a criminal investigation against the police team headed by Solovykh on the charge of illegally breaking into her apartment. But while she was waiting for the appeal's result, the story unfolded in an unexpected way.

Six days later, on February 25, after coming back home from work at 9:30 p.m., the investigator noticed that the lock of her apartment door was broken, the door itself was open, and the lights were on. N found out from a neighbor that this time around, it was a drunken local police officer by the name of Shapovalov who had broken into her home, just an hour before. According to N's neighbors, the officer was looking for something in her apartment, and when he found a file full of documents, he left with them. For some reason, he also took the neighbor's sister and niece away with him.

The investigator dialed 02 again, where she was told that a team from police station No. 76 would soon be dispatched. When N objected, explaining that the officers who first broke into her home worked at none other than police station No.76, the 02 operator on duty rejected her request to send a different police team. Had N not been an investigator, she would have had to make many more calls and explain her story time and again. But since she was one, she first reported what happened directly to the head of her department, and then contacted other appropriate officials in the [Interior Ministry's] Main Department of Investigations.

…

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Magomed Yevloyev
"On the Situation in the Republic of Ingushetia"
(Originally published on the Web site *Ingushetiya.ru*, on an unknown date, and republished on *Ingushetia.org* on February 25, 2009; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

The situation in the Republic of Ingushetia has been deteriorating and might lead to social turmoil with serious negative political and economic consequences.

Below, I have briefly laid out the salient points, characterizing the current state of affairs in the republic.

Because of the blundering policies of Ingushetia's administration; its insufficient attention to the problems of unemployment, the poor standard of living, and other issues the effect of which has been compounded by pervasive corruption among state officials; and because of the detachment of authorities from the needs of their constituents—the credibility of the local and federal government has dropped to its lowest.

Wahhabism—the radical movement in Islam—has gained popularity among young people, particularly those living in rural areas.

A lot of youths have been joining Wahhabi groups while the regional government passively stands by, doing nothing to prevent the trend. In fact, Wahhabi clubs have been freely and publicly propagating their theories—which are foreign to traditional Islam—in various parts of Ingushetia.

As a result, it has become possible for Chechen rebels to establish military bases and tent camps in the forests of Ingushetia, and be actively joined by Ingushetians who are attracted to the ideas of Wahhabism.

Those were the groups responsible for the attack on power structures and peaceful citizens on the night of June 22, 2004.

Ingushetia's president, Murat Zyazikov, has no authority among the population. The last traces of it—which had only lingered on due to President Vladimir Putin's support for him, a fact Zyazikov has missed no opportunity to point out—vanished following the June 22, 2004, events in Ingushetia, and the terrorist act committed on September 1 in Beslan.

During the armed attack of the rebels on the night of June 21-22, Murat Zyazikov, as the commander-in-chief of the republic, not only did not lead the actions of resisting the rebels, but disappeared somewhere. Most residents of Ingushetia are convinced that he was hiding in the basement of one of his relatives.

The population's discontent peaked with regards to Zyazikov's behavior during the terrorist act in Beslan. The elders heading Ingushetia's main clans—who wanted to go to Beslan—were looking for the president for three days and could not find him; he only reappeared after the school hostage crisis was over.

During his short tenure as president, Murat Zyazikov has alienated almost all federal officials: the head of the Supreme Court, the interior minister, the prosecutor of the republic, the head of the security service, and representatives of the Southern Federal District. Zyazikov wants to replace all of them with people loyal to him. He has partly succeeded in this—those and other government posts are openly auctioned off in the republic.

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Natalya Skryl
"Ordinary Extraordinary Meeting"
(Originally published in *Nashe Vremya* on January 25, 2002; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

Scheduled for 8 a.m. on Sunday, January 20, the Tagmet shareholders' meeting went calmly, as was planned by the stock owners with a controlling share. Everyone but an Alfa-Eco representative, who did not consider the meeting legitimate, was allowed to speak. In addition, the

general director, Sergei Bidash, exchanged remarks with the director of the Alfa-Eco metallurgical department, Vadim Kucharin, basically saying: "We respect you, but you don't respect us." The voting showed that the Alfa stake in the company has not increased: The previous power balance has remained in the new board of directors.

In the place of Vladimir Verba, who resigned a month ago, Nikolai Orlov, the general director of the public corporation Priasovsky, was approved as chairman of the board of directors. Thus, the meeting safely reached a "status quo." Only a beefed-up security presence at the entrance [to the plant] pointed to tensions. Since Friday afternoon, armed guards have not let anyone into the building where the meeting was supposed to take place. On Sunday morning, even a court officer who carried an order to cancel the meeting was not allowed into the building.

The main events that led to the resignation of the chairman of board of directors took place in December. It sounds like a detective story.

The first meeting of the board of directors took place on December 21 on the initiative of the company Dzhnou Properties Limited, which is considered to be a partner of Alfa. The agenda of the day was to hold a shareholders' meeting to re-elect the board of directors. The thing is that Mr. Kazakov, the Dzhnou representative at Tagmet, resigned after his appointment as the Rostov Region representative at the Federation Council, and his replacement had to be approved at the meeting. In addition, Alfa demanded a report on the situation around the plant. Directors were discussing when and where the next meeting would be held—in Taganrog or in Moscow—until nightfall. According to Bidash, they finally decided on Taganrog. However, Alfa claims that an agreement was never achieved.

….

On that same day, December 21, the Taganrog court issued a decision crucial to the development of further events. In April of the previous year, following an Alfa initiative, a new edition of company guidelines was approved at one of the shareholder meetings. According to the changes, the board of directors were to approve all important decisions by a minimum of 10 out of 11 votes. One shareholder considered this a violation of his rights, and the court supported his claim.

According to Vadim Kucharin, everything that happened afterward falls within the "domain of speculation." On December 26, Vladimir Verba signs a document canceling the upcoming meeting of the board of the directors and then resigns. The minutes taken at the December 21 meeting are allegedly rewritten. Each side explains the reasons that led to the chairman's resignation in its own way.

…

It should be said that Vladimir Verba … owns about 16 percent of Tagmet's shares, so any of the parties involved cannot be uninterested in trying to draw him to their side. We can only guess what the methods of dealing with the former chairman have been.

…

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Vagif Kochetkov
"Protek: The Benefactor Forced Upon Us"
(Originally published in *Molodoi Kommunar* on June 17, 2005; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

Doctors advise that sick, low-income people stock up on healing herbs for self-medication. Well, the times are good for this. To rely on the state, which is supposed to provide free medications, is not recommended to Tula residents. Even the regional administration does not know what to do with the confusing Law No. 122 [on medical coverage] and the commercial interests that accompany it.

"A protection racket" for a closed company

There is only one "benefactor" on our market,

which has been authorized to provide medication to those citizens who have the right to get state social benefits: the closed joint-stock company Protek Center for Implementation.

The Moscow-based Protek did not appear in the Tula region out of thin air. The government of the Russian Federation forced it upon us. There have been rumors floating about in the corridors of the Tula White House [the government building] about a special relationship between this company and Russian Health Minister Mikhail Zurabov. This seems to be the reason no one in the previous [Tula] regional administration would stand up for the interests of local residents dependent on state medical benefits. How come the governments of the Moscow, St. Petersburg, or Sverdlovsk regions could do it and Tula's could not? In the Tula region, Protek has de facto monopolized the medical benefits' market: In the past five months, Protek sales people have dictated their conditions, forcing local pharmacies and hospitals to accept their one-sided contracts.

…

Complete losses

Here are the opinions of those directly dealing with the implementation of Law No. 122 on the ground. Among them are the doctors and heads of the pharmacies who "lucked out" to be Protek partners.

"We have borne total losses," says E. Koshar, head of the Bogoroditsk central district pharmacy. "The contract forced upon us by Protek does not benefit us. We provided [Protek] with offices as well as with our specialists who have done additional work without being paid. Protek hasn't even paid for what we have spent on them from our own budget."

Here I need to clarify. As a matter of fact, according to Law No. 122, the prescriptions for low-income patients are issued in a new way and in compliance with the government-approved list of medications. This list contains 2,000 items and each item has its own code. A company chosen by the government theoretically should itself manage the process of prescribing medicines, providing services in the pharmacy, and paying the Medical Insurance Fund. But in Tula, all this is being done by the personnel of local hospitals and pharmacies. For free. And this is despite the fact that Protek has enough resources to do the work on its own.

"Workers are quitting their jobs," complains L. Kashirina, the director of the state-owned company Shchekinskaya. "Our pharmacy bears losses. Protek's leadership is confusing everybody. Until recently, we hoped for good relations with this company, but their contract hurts us. These so-called partners don't even want to hear us out."

…

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Valery Ivanov
(Under the pen name Gamlet Oganesyants)
"This Is How It Happened"

(Originally published in *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*, in April 2000; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

…

It might sound strange, but it is much more difficult to explain to members of the law enforcement agencies—rather than to the criminals—that freedom of speech is not just a declared right in the Constitution, but a reality for us who live in Togliatti. In order to prove this, we had to endure a criminal investigation, which the Federal Security Service (FSB) opened against us because of an article we published. The FSB charged us with an alleged disclosure of state secrets.

This happened in the spring of 1999. By that time, we had become pretty strong as a publication. People trusted us, and we had added an extra section to the paper called "Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye in Every Home." By that time, we had become able to influence public opinion. Elec-

tions were coming up. Because we were absolutely independent, many politicians viewed us as a real threat. And this was because none of them could predict how we would behave during the campaign. I believe that those fears were the reasons for the launching of a criminal case against us. So, the story began when the surveillance department of the Togliatti police somehow caught on fire and burned down. We reported on it. However, it seemed a little strange that this department was burned down just after a tragic fire damaged the police department in Samara [the regional capital]. In a strange coincidence, official documents at both these police departments were destroyed in the fire. We were sure that those events were related to corruption deals—and that certain people had simply tried to cover up their tracks by burning compromising documents. And if with the Samara fire—in which a lot of people died—people believed that what happened was an accident, when a second fire followed it, that version of events did not sound truthful. We connected the dots and published an article. Many were outraged by it.

If we hadn't published the article about the fires, no one would have known anything. Our publication led to several inspections conducted by the Interior Ministry. Later we learned that the Interior Minister, who had come for a visit to Togliatti, was yelling furiously: "Close down this newspaper!"

Well, it looks like someone perceived his statement as a call to action. A criminal case for the alleged disclosure of state secrets was opened against us. Here, we were confronted with the FSB machine, and we came out of this confrontation with deep respect for this agency. Since the FSB has been in the shadows, we couldn't possibly imagine that it had managed to hold on to its former habits and skills so well. But when FSB agents began calling us in for interrogations, when we learned that almost all of us had been under a 24-hour surveillance (we should point out that the FSB did not even try to hide this, but, instead, was blatant about it), when the chance of being imprisoned became real, when we saw our sources being uncovered, when we were interrogated about our family relations dating almost back to the October Revolution, and when agents demanded that we identify our sources of information—we realized that the FSB had managed to preserve its professional skills.

Having said that, I think that low-ranking FSB members did not know that they were executing someone's political orders; they were simply working diligently. But why? If they were working to punish some criminals, we could just thank them for a job well done. But they were working against a newspaper that had committed no crime and was simply trying to honestly inform its readers about what was going on in their city.

Despite enormous pressure, none of us at *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* gave away our sources … We managed to attract the support of some members of parliament, as well as the attention of regional and federal media who became interested in our case and came to our aid. We also carried out our own investigation into the activities of FSB officials, the results of which could have led to a loud scandal. ...

As a result, the regional prosecutor's office admitted that we had committed no crime and closed the case against us. So, yet again, we defended our press freedom and the right of citizens to receive accurate information. Incidentally, we would have to do that many times over.

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Aleksei Sidorov
"The Black Gold of the Criminals and State Officials"
(Originally published in *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*, on December 20, 2001; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

Let us begin with the fact that in Togliatti there is no such thing as centralized purchase of oil products for municipal transportation. The mayor's office, the health department, the housing department, the transportation department, the city legislature—all of these have their own means of transportation. And all of them buy gasoline separately, from different providers, for different prices. Naturally, this situation is conducive to all kinds of abuse by bureaucrats and directors of municipal transportation. That is, they usually purchase gasoline at inflated prices above what it costs at any gas station in the city. One "overspent" ruble, paid from the budget for a liter of gasoline, can bring many millions of rubles in profit to a businessman. No one doubts that the businessman will share this financial gain with the person responsible for signing the beneficial contract.

Thus, during the first quarter of 2001, the biggest passenger transportation company in the city, ATP-1, would buy gasoline No. 76 for the price of 7 rubles and 30 kopeks. It means that ATP-1 would pay one ruble more for the same one liter of gasoline than the citizens would. As a result of this "generosity," ATP-1 lost 9.8 million rubles. But then a miracle happened right after a revision was executed by the financial department of the mayor's office. In particular—the cost of one liter of gasoline went down by two rubles. By the way, we should point out that the individual responsible for getting and distributing gasoline at ATP–1 is the son of the company's director. Dad buys and the son distributes. The revision uncovered a lot of violations in the regulations for storing and distributing gasoline. So many violations have been identified that dad even had to formally scold his son.

Are you paying the criminals every time you purchase a bus ticket?

Everyone knows that organized crime groups (OPG) control the "gasoline business" of municipal institutions. In theory, some ATP directors get to know the criminals in the following way: A contract is signed by companies controlled by the OPG; then if anyone else offers a better deal regarding gasoline or spare parts, the offer is rejected. In case an ATP director dares to break the "working" relationship with the criminals, he would find himself in a hospital very soon.

On February 8, 2000, ATP-2 director Nikolai Konyayev was attacked. Unidentified assailants beat him up with iron rods right in the entrance of his apartment building. According to investigators, Konyayev had refused to accept an offer from one of those groups to only receive gasoline and spares from them.

On November 22, 2001, Aleksandr Chursin, the head of the department responsible for the city's alternative means of transportation at the mayor's office, was attacked as well. Based on what we managed to find out about the investigation of this case, the attack was related to Chursin's professional activities. As a matter of fact, most of the means of alternative transportation in the city [mini-buses] have been controlled by organized crime groups. Not until recently did the mayor's office try to regulate these alternative means of transportation. Consequently, those who ran the mini-buses practically did not pay taxes or issue passengers tickets (that is, they pocketed the ticket money), so the local budget did not receive any money from them. While the routes worked by the alternative mini-buses are the busiest and, therefore, the most profitable, the number of municipal buses on those same routes has been declining. The mayor's office recently decided to get involved and put things back in order. Chursin was given the task. But soon after he started working on a reform, unidentified attackers came to him with iron rods.

These cases are not isolated.

…

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Igor Domnikov
"Lipetsk Awoke in an Economic Miracle"
(Originally published in *Novaya Gazeta* on February 21, 2000; translated for CPJ by Ekaterina Lysova)

…

By the way, we have touched upon a name among the servants of the Komsomol that is most unloved by me—Dorovskoi, who is the deputy governor of economics. When you drive through the [Lipetsk] region and see something disgusting, you need not wonder who is responsible for it.

…

We should say that even the powerful Dorovskoi sometimes makes childish mistakes. But no one either reprimands him or points this out to him. For example, he authorized an ice cream factory, "as an exemption," to sell its products from May to September on ice cream stands without cash registers "with the goal of improving customer service." Even those who don't know a lot about trade in Russia, will raise their eyebrows, unbutton the top of their shirts, and say after a moment of silence, "Wow, such a daring guy! I bet you he will be the boss in prison."

Those people may be even more outraged when they find out that this authorization is fake, issued under an invalid number. But we shall reassure the skeptics: Nothing bad will happen to Dorovskoi. Believe me, he has been in even thicker situations, made even bigger mistakes, but he still walks free.

I would very much like to make an upset face and demand that the Prosecutor General help his Lipetsk colleagues punish Dorovskoi for getting too intimate with Lipetsk's ice cream [business], but, for some reason, I don't believe that would make any difference.

Unfortunately, my storytelling gift is insufficient to convey the scope with which this sort of barter is practiced in the region. All this inedible mash of figures, names, and orders—it is not appropriate for the newspaper.

The system in its essence is simple. The businesses make money but do not pay taxes; they profit by pushing either their own products on the market, or some farm produce they bought at low prices. Sometimes things are head-on: The budget credits all debt, though much of it stays unpaid. It is not that interesting to dig inside this mess. I am just going to say that one-third of Lipetsk's residents do not pay their maintenance bills—they have no money at all, while factory managements purchase large quantities of furniture, video and audio equipment, and so on.

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APPENDIX II

Key statistics as compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists

Deadliest Countries for Journalists Since 1992

CPJ began compiling detailed data on journalist deaths in 1992. Our data include only deaths in which we are reasonably certain a journalist was killed in direct reprisal for his or her work; killed in crossfire; or killed while carrying out a dangerous assignment. CPJ data do not include accidental deaths such as car or plane crashes. Here are the 10 deadliest countries for the press since 1992:

1. IRAQ
139 deaths (89 of them murders)

2. ALGERIA
60 deaths (58 murders)

3. RUSSIA
50 deaths (30 murders)

4. COLOMBIA
41 deaths (38 murders)

5. PHILIPPINES
35 deaths (33 murders)

6. SOMALIA
29 deaths (19 murders)

7. INDIA
26 deaths (16 murders)

8. PAKISTAN
21 deaths (13 murders)

9. BOSNIA
19 deaths (2 murders)

TURKEY
19 deaths (17 murders)

Deadliest Countries for Journalists Since 2000

Here are the 10 deadliest countries during this decade:

1. IRAQ
139 deaths (89 of them murders)

2. PHILIPPINES
29 deaths (27 murders)

3. RUSSIA
20 deaths (17 murders)

SOMALIA
20 deaths (10 murders)

5. PAKISTAN
19 deaths (12 murders)

6. COLOMBIA
18 deaths (16 murders)

7. AFGHANISTAN
16 deaths (12 murders)

SRI LANKA
16 deaths (10 murders)

9. INDIA
11 deaths (7 murders)

10. MEXICO
10 deaths (10 murders)

CPJ's Impunity Index

CPJ's Impunity Index calculates the number of unsolved journalist murders as a percentage of each country's population. CPJ examined every nation worldwide over the last decade. Only those nations with five or more unsolved cases are included on the index.

1. IRAQ
Impunity Index Rating: 2.983 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

2. SIERRA LEONE
Impunity Index Rating: 1.552 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

3. SOMALIA
Impunity Index Rating: 0.690 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

4. SRI LANKA
Impunity Index Rating: 0.452 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

5. COLOMBIA
Impunity Index Rating: 0.347 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

6. PHILIPPINES
Impunity Index Rating: 0.273 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

7. AFGHANISTAN
Impunity Index Rating: 0.248 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

8. NEPAL
Impunity Index Rating: 0.178 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

9. RUSSIA
Impunity Index Rating: 0.106 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

10. PAKISTAN
Impunity Index Rating: 0.062 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

11. MEXICO
Impunity Index Rating: 0.057 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

12. BANGLADESH
Impunity Index Rating: 0.044 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

13. BRAZIL
Impunity Index Rating: 0.026 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

14. INDIA
Impunity Index Rating: 0.006 unsolved journalist murders per 1 million inhabitants.

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