



A Worldwide Survey by the Committee to Protect Journalists

ATTACKS ON THE PRESS IN 2009



Preface by **FAREED ZAKARIA**

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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Back cover: AP/Bullit Marquez—*Protesters in Manila call for justice in the mass killings of journalists and others in Maguindanao province, Philippines.*

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Attacks on the Press in 2009:
A Worldwide Survey by the Committee to Protect Journalists

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PREFACE

BY FAREED ZAKARIA

TOWARD THE END OF HIS 118-DAY ORDEAL INSIDE TEHRAN'S EVIN PRISON, *Newsweek* reporter Maziar Bahari had a bizarre exchange with his interrogator. Bahari had been held in solitary confinement since his arrest after Iran's disputed presidential election in June; he had been subjected to near-daily beatings and interrogation sessions that stretched for hours. But his jailers had not been able to prove their accusation that Bahari was a spy for Western intelligence agencies. So they had an ominous-sounding new charge to levy against him: "media espionage."

As Bahari later recounted, his interrogator didn't have a specific definition for the crime, only an analogy. As a reporter for a Western news organization, the man said, Bahari had been paid to send reports to foreigners—in his words, to "enemies of Iran." Was that not precisely what spies did? Case closed.

Bahari could laugh when telling the story later, home with his wife and child in London. But Iran's Revolutionary Guards have essentially criminalized journalism in their post-election crackdown. Like Bahari, several reporters have been accused of being instigators of a "velvet revolution" in the Islamic Republic—shapers, rather than witnesses to events. Since June, more than 90 have been arrested. Twenty-three remained in prison in late year, and some received years-long sentences after quick show trials. In 2009, Iran became one of the world's leading jailers of journalists, second only to China. Other authoritarian governments are watching, and no doubt learning from Tehran's effort to muzzle the press.



Bahari was lucky. He had the resources of *Newsweek* and the Washington Post Company behind him. With the help of the Committee to Protect Journalists and others, we were able to mount an international campaign on his behalf. Newspapers around the globe ran ads and editorials calling for Bahari's release. World leaders pressured the Iranian government both publicly and privately.

But the media business is changing rapidly. Unable to afford foreign bureaus, more newspapers and magazines are relying on freelancers abroad. These stringers look just as suspicious to dictators and militant groups—and they are distinctly more vulnerable. In late year, Iran was still holding three U.S. hikers, one of whom had worked as a freelance journalist in the Middle East.

FREELANCERS AND LOCAL JOURNALISTS TAKE ON ADDED IMPORTANCE AND GREATER RISK.

In November, two freelancers, a Canadian and an Australian, were released by a Somali rebel group after 15 months in captivity; with no media organization behind them, their case had received scant attention. Nine freelancers were killed in reprisal for their work in 2009, while 60 others were in prisons worldwide in late year. As publications and TV networks continue to shed staff and look for ways to cover conflicts more affordably, the number of such cases is only going to grow.

In this new environment, local journalists are going to assume added importance—and they will take on greater risk. In increasingly violent Pakistan, local reporters face threats from the Taliban and other militants, along with government harassment and military indifference to their safety. (A year ago, *Newsweek's* Sami Yousafzai was shot at point-blank range by a Taliban assassin and then detained by Pakistani police as soon as he left the hospital.) The Somali press corps has suffered devastating losses. Nine local journalists were killed in 2009 and dozens have fled the country. Western correspondents—few of whom venture into Somalia now—no longer have sources to rely upon for basic information. Says Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Paul Salopek: "They were the first responders, if you will, to breaking news in Somalia. And most of them are gone." Other than the U.S. hiker, the reporters inside Evin Prison are Iranians who worked for local media outlets; many others have been cowed into silence or have left the country.

Quite a few of those Iranian prisoners are bloggers, or reporters and editors

Associated Press—*In Tehran, more than 100 dissidents and journalists faced vague antistate accusations during a mass, televised judicial proceeding in August.*

for opposition Web sites. And with good reason: In many repressive societies, where newspapers and radio and TV stations are routinely shuttered, online journalists have often been the most nimble at circumventing press restrictions. In Cuba, for example, where at least 25 journalistic blogs cover social issues and political news, bloggers cobble together personal computers from black-market parts and use their precious spare money to buy time at Internet cafés. But like other freelancers, they also work without the sort of institutional protections—including lawyers, money, and professional affiliations—that can help shield them from harassment or detention. These types of journalists are especially vulnerable in China, Burma, Vietnam, and Iran. Indeed, half the news people in jail worldwide are online journalists.

This changing landscape makes the work done by the Committee to Protect Journalists more critical than ever. Repressive regimes like Iran's count on the anonymity of their victims, on the world ignoring or overlooking who they've arrested and why. And without the imprimatur of a major news organization, it's indeed all too easy for freelancers, bloggers, and local journalists to disappear. What they need is the kind of spotlight that CPJ can bring to bear. Governments do respond to pressure that is consistent, principled, and well-publicized—otherwise, a reporter like Bahari might still be in jail. In Russia, three more journalists were killed during the year, bringing to 19 the number of reporters slain since the beginning of the decade. But in response to growing international concern, including a CPJ delegation's visit to Moscow, Russian authorities have agreed to re-examine several unsolved cases.

Advocacy works, and this work benefits all of us—those of us who hire freelancers, who rely on local blogs for firsthand information about faraway countries, who work with local journalists who have the kinds of insight and connections that can only be built over years. More than anything else, it benefits our readers and viewers and listeners. By targeting journalists, the regime in Tehran is hoping to screen off from the world's view the repression and abuse of its own people. Preventing them and others like them from succeeding is a mission deserving of our utmost efforts.

Fareed Zakaria is editor of *Newsweek International* and host of “Fareed Zakaria GPS” on CNN. He is the author of several books, including the bestsellers *The Future of Freedom* and *The Post-American World*.

INTRODUCTION

BY JOEL SIMON

DOES “NAME AND SHAME” STILL WORK IN THE INTERNET AGE? After all, the massacre of 31 journalists and media workers in the Philippines pushed the 2009 media death toll to the highest level ever recorded by CPJ. The number of journalists in prison also rose, fueled by the fierce crackdown in Iran.

For more than three decades, the strategy of “name and shame” has been a hallmark of the international human rights movement. The guiding premise is that even the most brutal leaders want to hide—or at least justify—their repressive actions. If abuses could be exposed through meticulously documented reports, and if those reports could generate coverage in major international media outlets, governments would be compelled to curb their most egregious behavior.

The strategy worked exceptionally well from the 1970s through the 1990s, when foreign correspondents functioned as information gatekeepers, broadly shaping perceptions about events in a particular country. This was a time when a single editorial in a major publication like *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* could mobilize public opinion and produce a shift in policy. Those days are over.

Today's fragmented and diffuse media landscape has opened new opportunities for advocacy campaigns, ones that unite local and international concerns, ones that use blogs, e-mail blasts, and social media to shape public opinion. With the power of traditional media diminished, getting your message out is a painstaking process that demands the use of multiple methods. This is true whether



you are running a political campaign, marketing a movie, or fighting for the human rights of journalists working in repressive countries.

The good news is that these new strategies are effective, even in places you would not expect. Governments, including the most recalcitrant and repressive, still respond to international pressure.

Take Iran, which saw one of the most vicious and widespread crackdowns on the press in recent memory. More than 90 journalists were rounded up to suppress dissent in the aftermath of the disputed June presidential election. When CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1, Iran still held 23 writers and editors, a figure second only to China. It could have been even worse.

The hard-line leadership that coalesced around President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recognized that it would pay a high price in terms of international

**PRESS FREEDOM DEFENDERS SPEAK
TO MORE AUDIENCES AND USE A
GREATER RANGE OF TACTICS.**

opinion for its violent and brutal tactics, which is precisely why it shut down the foreign press corps in Tehran, expelling journalists and

seeking to confine the remainder to their bureaus. Iran's leaders viewed the media as part of an international conspiracy to discredit the election and overthrow the regime. Jailing journalists was part of this paranoid fantasy.

But not all factions in Iran saw the situation the same way. There are elements within the Iranian government that care deeply about what the world—or at least a part of it—thinks of the regime. The government supports a sophisticated English-language television network, Press TV, which targets the global intelligentsia and serves as an instrument in the war of ideas with the West.

By raising the visibility of imprisoned journalists in Iran through e-mail alerts, media interviews, Facebook petitions, blog posts, and a variety of other means, CPJ provided Iranians who care about the erosion of their country's international reputation with arguments to push back against hard-line elements. How this interplay works is difficult to discern, but there is no doubt that international pressure played a role in the release of high-profile journalists such as *Newsweek* correspondent Maziar Bahari and freelancer Roxana Saberi.

Similar public campaigns led to the release of imprisoned journalists in countries as diverse as Burma, which freed three reporters as part of an amnesty

(Previous) CPJ/Aleksandr Yakovlev—*At a Moscow press conference, CPJ's Kati Marton issues a report on Russia's failure to solve journalist killings.*

of political detainees, and the Gambia, where the country's autocratic and thin-skinned leader pardoned six journalists who had been convicted on baseless charges of sedition. All told, CPJ advocacy contributed to the release of 45 imprisoned journalists in 2009.

Press freedom defenders are speaking to more audiences and using a greater range of tactics than ever before. That means working collaboratively with domestic press groups and targeting specific messages to local and international audiences. In the Gambia, an assertive local press union took the lead in generating public outrage at home, while CPJ blog posts, tweets, and e-mail alerts helped prompt a flurry of condemnations on Africa-focused Web sites and public appeals from U.S. and British officials.

Even in the Philippines, which suffered the deadliest event for the press that CPJ has ever recorded, these new strategies have made inroads.

CPJ, with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, has been carrying out a campaign against impunity in the Philippines in partnership with local groups. In March 2009, to mark the fourth anniversary of the killing of renowned Philippine investigative reporter Marlene Garcia-Esperat, CPJ traveled to Manila to release its second annual Impunity Index, a global ranking of countries that fail to bring the killers of journalists to justice.

The Philippines ranked worst among peacetime democracies, trailing only war-ridden places such as Iraq and Somalia. The office of President Gloria Arroyo-Macapagal fired back at the time, calling CPJ's findings "an exaggeration." The November 23 massacre in Maguindanao province demonstrated tragically that the failure of Philippine authorities to confront the culture of impunity has grave consequences. The political clan members accused of carrying out the killings believed—with justification—that they could get away with it.

**AFTER A PHILIPPINE MASSACRE,
LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL
GROUPS WORK TOGETHER
TO RESPOND.**

But thanks to Philippine press advocates, there is now widespread awareness of the government's failures—and widespread revulsion. Within days of the killings, Philippine journalists and media groups came together to travel to the scene of the massacre, provide assistance to victims' families, carry out an independent investigation, and produce a well-documented report that was widely distributed online. Within weeks, a global delegation from the International Federation of Journalists, CPJ, and other groups was on the ground to support the local efforts.

The cost of failing to address impunity should be evident not only to the other countries on CPJ's Impunity Index—nations such as Russia, Mexico,

and Pakistan—but to their international partners as well. In September, a CPJ delegation traveled to Moscow and Brussels to present *Anatomy of Injustice*, our in-depth examination of unsolved journalist killings in Russia. In Moscow, we made the case directly to top investigators and other officials; in Brussels, we met with European Union officials to press the point that this is their problem as well. Russian investigators invited CPJ to return in 2010 to assess their progress. We will be there.

The tragedies of 2009 only make our challenge more clear. Creating vibrant and secure global media requires new strategic thinking to bring killers to justice, to reduce the number of journalists in jail, and to support reporters working in exile or in repressive environments. On all of these fronts, there has been progress.

In Cuba, a lively community of independent bloggers is emerging despite some of the world's most repressive censorship laws. In Zimbabwe, many of the same journalists who were forced into exile in the early part of the decade are again disseminating news to Zimbabweans on the airwaves, in print, and online.

In China, the number of journalists in jail has declined from a high of 42 in 2004 to 24 today. Traditional journalists who expose corruption are more likely now to be fired than to be hauled off to jail. But questioning the Communist system remains off-limits: Most of the journalists in jail in China today are online freelancers who do just that. Defending these opinion journalists is a huge test.

At a time when technology is changing the way people around the world gather and receive information, when international news organization are cutting back and closing bureaus, freelancers, local reporters, and online journalists are more important than ever. The press critic A.J. Liebling once quipped, "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." In today's world, that's just about everyone. While the rights of each journalist are protected by international law, few have large media organizations that can stand behind them. Instead, their safety and security depends on the ability of press freedom organizations to generate public attention and mobilize action.

Protestations from repressive governments about "foreign meddling" and "secret agendas" are evidence that our campaigns are having the intended effect. The revolution in global information has created new challenges, but "name and shame" is alive and well.

Joel Simon is the executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists.



AFRICA

ANALYSIS

The public is paying dearly for an exodus of local reporters from Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and other nations. Coverage is dwindling on issues of international importance.

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PHOTOS

Section break: Reuters/Thomas Mukoya—*At a Kampala newsstand, headlines detail rioting that followed a confrontation between the Ugandan government and the Buganda kingdom.* Analysis: Reuters/Feisal Omar—*Al-Shabaab militants patrol Mogadishu's Bakara Market, home to several media outlets.*

IN AFRICAN HOT SPOTS, JOURNALISTS FORCED INTO EXILE

BY TOM RHODES

HIGH NUMBERS OF LOCAL JOURNALISTS HAVE FLED SEVERAL African countries in recent years after being assaulted, threatened, or imprisoned, leaving a deep void in professional reporting. The starkest examples are in the Horn of Africa nations of Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, where dozens of journalists have been forced into exile. Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and the Gambia have also lost large segments of the local press corps in the face of intimidation and violence.

Those who flee their native countries pay a high price: Facing cultural, language, and legal obstacles, they struggle to find work in their profession. CPJ research shows that only one in three is able to continue working as a journalist. But the public also pays dearly for the exodus of professional, local reporters from these countries, all of which have had internal strife with international implications. Not only had domestic audiences relied upon these front-line journalists, so too had international reporters, who used local coverage as a base of information and depended on local reporters for the sort of sources and knowledge only a native can have.

Yet it is not simply a shortage of reliable information that has resulted, journalists say. Perversely, in some instances, the exodus of professional journalists



has enabled governments or political factions to exert editorial control over once-independent news outlets. “The high exile rates of journalists have not brought a lack of information so much as misinformation,” said Abdiaziz Hassan, a local correspondent for Reuters in Somalia. “It incites the conflict further.”

Among the hardest hit has been Radio Shabelle, a Somali station that had earned a reputation for independent reporting. Situated in Mogadishu’s Bakara Market—home to a number of media outlets, but also a base of operations for the militant insurgent group Al-Shabaab—the station has seen five of its journalists killed, numerous staffers threatened, and several forced into exile. Without sufficient management on site, the station has been susceptible to pressure from Al-Shabaab to censor its coverage and even broadcast the group’s propaganda, according to Mohamed Amin, a former Shabelle deputy director now in exile.

In all, CPJ has documented the cases of 30 Somali journalists who have gone into exile this decade, the fourth-highest tally worldwide during the period. CPJ’s data on exiled journalists include only those journalists who fled due to work-related persecution, who remained in exile for at least three months, and whose whereabouts and activities are known. Local organizations using different criteria report higher numbers. The Union of Exiled Somali Journalists, for example, counts as many as 80 exiled reporters. Most of these exiles have fled in the face of astonishing violence: Twenty-one Somali journalists have been killed in direct connection to their work since 2005, some at the hands of government forces, many at the hands of militant groups such as Al-Shabaab.

INSURGENTS TARGET ENGLISH-SPEAKING SOMALI JOURNALISTS, FORCING MANY INTO EXILE.

Mohamed, who said insurgents have targeted English-speaking journalists in Mogadishu as “spies.” That, in turn, has a domino effect on international reporting.

Among international news outlets, only the satellite channels Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya maintained an ongoing presence in the country in late year. Paul Salopek, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who has covered the continent for many years, noted that few international journalists even venture into Somalia, particularly Mogadishu, because of the severe risks. International correspondents are forced instead to report by phone from Nairobi, Kenya. “That’s how isolated we’ve become from the story on the ground,” said Salopek, who called war and drought conditions in Somalia “one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world.” Without reliable local reporters to provide baseline information, the task of telling the Somali story to the world has become extraordinarily difficult.

“There’s little question that the decimation of Somali journalists—by assas-

sination or through exile—has reduced the quantity and quality of news coming out of that country,” Salopek said. “They were the first responders, if you will, to breaking news in Somalia. And most of them are gone.”

In Ethiopia and Eritrea, mass imprisonments of journalists early in the decade have been followed by years of steady repression. The threat of jail has led at least 41 Ethiopian journalists and 24 Eritreans into exile, CPJ data show, although local groups suggest the figures may be much higher.

Ethiopian authorities have regularly used the law as leverage against the press, enacting two pieces of legislation in

WITHOUT RELIABLE LOCAL REPORTERS, THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS FACES A MORE DIFFICULT TASK.

2009 that further repress news coverage. An antiterrorism measure sets prison terms of up to 20 years for anyone who “writes, edits, prints, publishes, publicizes, or disseminates” statements that the government vaguely describes as advancing terrorist interests. The deceptively named Mass Media and Freedom of Information Proclamation stiffens penalties for libel and grants government prosecutors authority to censor publications on national security grounds.

For an Ethiopian press corps that saw 13 of its colleagues jailed in a massive 2005 crackdown, the passage of new, restrictive legislation sent a clear message: The government of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was again ready to imprison critical reporters and editors. “Everything became illegal,” said Wondrad Debretsion, an Ethiopian editor who recently went into exile. “Even state-sponsored reporters have started fleeing the country.” The continuing exodus has weakened the independence of the remaining Ethiopian press. The *Awramba Times*, a once critical publication, has taken a newly sympathetic stance toward the government, said Debretsion, who served as the paper’s deputy director before leaving the country in July.

No government has decimated the press corps as thoroughly as that of Eritrea, where in 2001 the administration of President Isaias Afewerki rounded up 18 critical editors and reporters, jailed them without trial, and held them in secret locations. The crackdown pushed other independent reporters into exile, and effectively shuttered the independent press. The government’s heavy-handed repression has also forced out state-employed journalists, one of whom, Paulos Kidane, died while trying to flee the country on foot for Sudan in 2007.

Gambian authorities have also used intimidation tactics: Seven editors and reporters were jailed for a month in 2009 on trumped-up charges of sedition; journalist “Chief” Ebrima Manneh was believed to be held in a secret government

jail; and the government continued to show little interest in solving the 2004 murder of editor Deyda Hydera. Such tactics have prompted at least 13 journalists

**NO GOVERNMENT HAS DECIMATED
THE PRESS CORPS AS THOROUGHLY
AS THAT OF ERITREA.**

to flee since 2007, according to the Gambia Press Union. That number becomes eye-opening when one considers that the Gambia has just

two independent newspapers and a population of 1.7 million. The journalists who remain often censor their work or simply avoid sensitive topics.

“There is no incentive for in-depth reporting or investigative journalism anymore as it can land one in trouble with authorities,” said Musa Saidu Khan, a Gambian journalist who fled after being tortured by state security agents in 2008.

Government harassment has also played a role in Rwanda, where at least 10 independent journalists have fled. Half of those journalists had contributed reporting to foreign media outlets, CPJ research shows. Robert Mukombozi, a Rwandan whose work as a correspondent for the Ugandan daily *The Monitor* had offended authorities, was ordered out of the country in 2009 on fabricated charges that he lacked citizenship. Lucie Umukundwa, a correspondent for the U.S. government-funded Voice of America, left in 2006 after unidentified men attacked her brother in reprisal for her reporting.

“I was used to arrests and intimidations,” Umukundwa told CPJ, “but this was the first time my family was attacked.”

Only two independent weeklies remain in Rwanda’s capital, Kigali. The director of one of those papers, Charles Kabonero, said the loss of his colleagues has not only lowered professional standards, it has left remaining journalists feeling isolated and less interested in pursuing independent stances. The private weekly *Rushashya*, which had been known as a critical news source, publicly announced in 2009 that it would take a more pro-government editorial stance.

Many exiled African journalists face great challenges and continuing risk. The Union of Exiled Somali Journalists said about half of its members eke out a precarious existence on the dangerous streets of Kenya’s capital, Nairobi. Most fled so precipitously that they took few belongings or identification papers. The exile union, along with the National Union of Somali Journalists, both said they had received reports that Somali exiles have faced arbitrary harassment and detention at the hands of Kenyan police.

The Rwandan Mukombozi told CPJ that members of his family had been assaulted twice in Kigali after he was forced into exile. “All that psychological pressure more than triples when such incidents happen,” he said by e-mail, “and the

restricted communication between the exiled journalist and his/her family makes the harm on both sides enormous.”

Gambian journalists seeking refuge typically move to Dakar, Senegal, but they are rarely at ease because of the suspected presence of Gambian security agents, said Demba Jawo, former head of the Gambian Press Union. “Sometimes exiled Gambian journalists feel compelled to move periodically to avoid detection from these security agents,” he said.

Even those in safe circumstances face enormous professional challenges. At least 48 Zimbabwean journalists have been forced into exile since 2000, most of them in the early half of the decade during sustained harassment by President Robert Mugabe’s government, according to CPJ research. In interviews with CPJ, many of these Zimbabwean journalists have said that it took years for them to re-establish themselves professionally and secure sound economic footings for their families. Many had to abandon journalism as a career.

Yet some who revived their careers also created a vibrant diaspora news media. Gerry Jackson, an exiled Zimbabwean journalist, launched the London-based SW Radio in 2001. The station broadcasts programming into Zimbabwe in English and in the Shona and Ndebele languages. Wilf Mbanga, another exile, started *The Zimbabwean* newspaper in 2005. Based in his new home in England, Mbanga produces a weekly that circulates in the United Kingdom, South Africa—and Zimbabwe. Abel Mutasakani, who left for South Africa in 2004, joined with other colleagues to start the Web publication *ZimOnline*.

**EXILED ZIMBABWEANS
HAVE CREATED VIBRANT
DIASPORA MEDIA.**

Ethiopian and Eritrean exiles have similarly launched Web sites, typically focusing on events back home. While limited in what they can report firsthand, these sites receive and report leaked documents, interview disaffected government sources, and offer critical political commentary.

The irony that exiled journalists are getting independent news and views into their native countries is not lost on people such as the Zimbabwean Geoff Hill. “Since nationalizing the press in 1981, Mugabe has done his best to control the flow of information, but now there are so many leaks in the bucket, it is more like a watering can,” said Hill, himself an exiled journalist who still reports on the country. “Much of the credit for this must go to the hard breed of Zimbabwean journalists—both at home and in exile—who refuse to surrender.”

Tom Rhodes is CPJ’s Africa program coordinator.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

AUTHORITIES CENSORED COVERAGE OF ARMED CONFLICT AND HUMAN rights violations in the mineral-rich eastern Kivu provinces. Insecurity reigned in the volatile region, despite the presence of the world's largest U.N. peacekeeping force. Tens of thousands of people continued to die every month from conflict,

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » RFI removed from FM frequencies; other stations censored.
- » Hundreds march in nine provinces to protest ongoing threats, violence.

KEY STATISTIC

3 Female journalists threatened with “a bullet to the head” after focusing their work on women’s issues.

disease, and famine, while human rights groups detailed pervasive rape and sexual violence. The vast Central African nation remained among the region’s riskiest for journalists three years after it transitioned to democracy in historic U.N.-backed elections. Throughout the country, officials harassed and obstructed journalists who criticized local officials.

In July, authorities removed French broadcaster

Radio France Internationale (RFI), a popular source of independent news, from the country’s FM frequencies over its coverage of the conflict in the eastern provinces. Speaking at a press conference in the capital, Kinshasa, Communications Minister Lambert Mendé Omalanga accused the station of “a systematic campaign of demoralization of the armed forces of the DRC,” according to Agence France-Presse. RFI said Congolese authorities faulted the station for citing a July 22 AFP news item that reported on the desertion of ex-rebels who had joined the national army as part of a peace deal. Earlier in the year, the government had blocked RFI broadcasts in the eastern cities of Bunia and Bukavu, citing national security. Omalanga accused RFI reporter Ghislaine Dupont of “attempting to destabilize the country” after the station reported government setbacks in managing the army and the peace process, according to local journalists. Expelled in 2006, Dupont has continued to report on news in the DRC. In a letter to President Joseph Kabila, CPJ protested the government’s actions against RFI as “arbitrary and based on unsubstantiated accusations.”

Country summaries in this chapter were researched and written by Africa Program Coordinator **Tom Rhodes** and Research Associate **Mohamed Hassim Keita**.

RFI could still be heard via shortwave, but the loss of its FM broadcasts was significant, Kinshasa-based reporter Charles Mushizi wrote in a guest column on the CPJ Blog. “With the national state media confiscated by the majority political group in power and the private Congolese press weakened by intense financial and political pressures and repression, most Congolese tune to Radio Okapi, a joint project of the Hirondelle Foundation and the United Nations Mission in DRC, and foreign stations like RFI for independent coverage,” Mushizi wrote.

“From the viewpoint of government,” Mushizi added, “national interest trumps fundamental freedoms.”

Across the nation, the Congolese national intelligence agency (known by its French acronym as ANR) policed newsrooms and broadcast studios and intimidated reporters who criticized local officials and public figures. ANR agents repeatedly harassed broadcasters in the central city of Mbuji-Mayi, for example. In April, ANR agents interrogated reporter Jean-Pierre Katende of Radio Télévision de l’Eglise Evangélique Libre d’Afrique for many hours after he interviewed a local politician who alleged corruption in the provincial parliament, according to the local press freedom group Journaliste En Danger (JED). In November, ANR agents raided the same station and Radio Télévision Debout Kasaï over commentary concerning road conditions and taxes, according to local journalists. Jeef Tshidibi, director of Radio Télévision de l’Eglise Evangélique Libre d’Afrique, and two employees were detained for 10 hours before being released without charge, according to JED.

Local officials also felt free to silence broadcasters over critical coverage. On March 11, the mayor of the southeastern city of Likasi and provincial authorities closed two private broadcasters, Radio Communautaire du Katanga and Radio-télévision Likasi 4, in connection with their coverage of a railway strike, according to JED. None of the officials appeared to have legal authority to take action against the stations, CPJ research showed. The bans were lifted in May.

More than a decade after the fall of dictator Mobutu Sese Seko led to the establishment of a free, private press, most media outlets are owned by public figures, according to Chantal Kanyimbo, president of the Congolese National Press Union, who said the situation has harmed the independence of journalists. In a phenomenon documented by JED, politicians in power have used security forces to harass their rivals’ partisan media outlets. Kanyimbo added that economic problems, including poor salaries and the absence of a substantial advertising market, have led to unethical practices in the profession. “Journalists are dependent on their sources of information to pay for their transportation,” she noted.

Journalists continued to seek reforms in the Congolese penal code and the 1996 press law, particularly to remove criminal penalties for press offenses such

as defamation, according to Kanyimbo. No legislative progress was reported, and some criminal defamation cases proceeded in the courts. In July, a judge in the northwestern city of Mbandaka sentenced freelance journalist Bienvenu Yay to a six-month suspended term and ordered him to pay US\$500 in damages in connection with a story critical of the former provincial governor, according to JED. The National Assembly did pass a bill in October establishing a regulatory agency, the High Council for Broadcasting, that many journalists hope will be independent. Kanyimbo called a provision that the council's nine members have professional media credentials or experience a rare victory for the press.

Kanyimbo and other female journalists have taken notable leadership roles in the Congolese press and have fostered training in the coverage of women's issues. In South Kivu, which has been devastated by systematic rape, the Association of Women Journalists trained aspiring female journalists and produced radio programs spotlighting women's issues. Such work drew reprisals. Reporters Delphie Namuto and Caddy Adzuba of Radio Okapi and Jolly Kamuntu of Radio Maendeleo, all members of the Association of Women Journalists, were threatened in an anonymous text message in September. The message, sent to Namuto, said: "You have a bad habit of interfering in what does not concern you to show that you are untouchable. Now, some of you will die so that you shut up. We've just been authorized to start with [Adzuba], then Kamuntu, then Namuto: a bullet to the head."

CPJ wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who had visited the eastern city of Goma in August, to urge her to "impress upon the authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo the importance of the safety of human rights defenders, including journalists reporting on the war and its impact on vulnerable sections of the population, particularly women." In October, hundreds of journalists staged marches in nine provinces to urge authorities to intervene in ongoing threats and violence against journalists. "We wanted to impress on them that the press represents a barometer of democracy," Kanyimbo told CPJ.

The dangers were greatest in the eastern city of Bukavu, where a reporter was murdered in unclear circumstances. Several assailants stabbed Bruno Koko Chirambiza, 24, a presenter with Radio Star, in August as he was walking home from a wedding with a friend. Chirambiza was found with his personal belongings intact, including a mobile phone and 5,600 Congolese francs (US\$7), according to Radio Star Program Director Jimmy Bianga. CPJ was investigating the killing to determine whether it was related to Chirambiza's work. No arrests were reported, although local journalists said a mob had lynched one person suspected in the attack.

The Chirambiza slaying was the third involving a Bukavu journalist in as many years. Didace Namujimbo, a reporter for Radio Okapi, was shot at close range near

his home late one evening in November 2008. The journalist's brother, Déo Namujimbo, told CPJ that the victim's cell phone was missing but cash had been left in his wallet. Suspects were identified and detained within days, but little progress has been reported in the courts. The motive remained unclear, and CPJ was investigating to determine whether the killing was related to Namujimbo's work.

Serge Maheshe, an editor and reporter for Radio Okapi, was gunned down in Bukavu in June 2007 as he was preparing to board a U.N. vehicle with two friends, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. The gunmen shot Maheshe several times in the chest and legs; the journalist's companions were uninjured. CPJ has determined the killing was in reprisal for Maheshe's work. Three men were ultimately convicted in the murder, but the proceedings were widely criticized for serious violations of the defendants' basic rights. Journalists, observers, and lawyers were also threatened during the proceedings, according to local and international media.

The absence of effective law enforcement allowed a culture of threats and violence to continue. In April, Déo Namujimbo received e-mail death threats that noted his involvement in a report by Reporters Without Borders on the murders of his brother and Maheshe, according to news reports. Namujimbo, who was also a leader of the Congolese National Press Union in South Kivu, won political asylum in France and hastily moved his family from the region. "Bukavu, the same city where I found shelter in July 2004 when the men of former warlord Gen. Laurent Nkunda were looking for me over a story about rebel atrocities, was becoming synonymous with deadly insecurity for journalists," Namujimbo wrote on the CPJ Blog.

ETHIOPIA

AHEAD OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 2010, THE ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) further curtailed the limited freedom of the country's small number of independent newspapers. The government enacted harsh legislation that criminalized coverage of vaguely defined "terrorist" activities, and used administrative restrictions, criminal prosecutions, and imprisonments to induce self-censorship. In all, four reporters and editors were being held when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was expected to seek another five-year term in the 2010 vote, the first general election since the disputed 2005 vote, which was marred by a bloody crackdown on political dissent and Ethiopia's once-vibrant Amharic-language press. With control of more than two-thirds of the seats

in parliament, virtually all local council seats, and a weakened opposition, Zenawi's administration tightened its control of the press as well.

In July, the EPRDF-controlled Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives passed the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation despite concerns by opposition lawmakers and legal experts about its far-reaching provisions, according to local journalists. Some reporters who spoke

to CPJ on the condition of anonymity said they had been pressured by officials and government supporters to censor coverage that scrutinized the legislation, which added to an existing body of law that restricts the press and the activities of nongovernmental organizations.

A provision of the terrorism law punishes "whosoever writes, edits, prints, publishes, publicizes, disseminates, shows, makes to be heard any promotional statements encouraging, supporting or advancing terrorist acts" with as much as 20 years in prison, according to CPJ research. The legislation conflated political opposition with terrorism. It contained broad definitions of a "terrorist organization," including any organization the government bans under the law, and of "terrorist acts," which include destruction of public property and "disruption of public services," according to an analysis by Human Rights Watch.

The legislation was detrimental to media coverage of political opposition groups that the government had banned and labeled as terrorist. In August, a public prosecutor convicted in absentia exiled journalists Dereje Habtewold and Fasil Yenealem. They were found guilty of involvement in a coup plot by the "terror network" of exiled opposition leader Berhanu Nega, according to news reports. Habtewold and Yenealem were editors of the political newsletter of Nega's Ginbot 7 movement, which is banned in Ethiopia. The same week in August, the government invoked the specter of terrorism when it unsuccessfully attempted to force private Kenyan broadcaster Nation Television (NTV) to drop an exclusive report on separatist rebels of the Oromo Liberation Front in southern Ethiopia. In a letter to the broadcaster's parent company, The Nation Media Group, Ethiopian ambassador to Kenya, Disasa Dirribsa, accused the station of speaking for "a terrorist group," according to the *Daily Nation*. Nevertheless, the station dismissed the pressure and aired the four-part series, according to Linus Kaikai, NTV's managing editor of broadcast news.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Terrorism law criminalizes coverage of sensitive topics.
- » Broadcasting Authority serves as government censor.

KEY STATISTIC

4 Journalists jailed as of December 1, 2009.

The terrorism legislation gave security agencies sweeping powers of warrantless interception of communications, and search and seizure, and allowed pretrial detention to extend up to four months, according to CPJ research. It was not clear whether the law would apply to Eritrean state television journalists Saleh Idris Gama and Tesfalidet Kidane who have been held incommunicado and without charge since late 2006 on suspicion of terrorism. Gama and Kidane were among 41 people the government said it had "captured" in Somalia. Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesman Wahde Belay told CPJ in October that he would provide no information about the two journalists.

The government dismissed concerns of potential abuse of the new terrorism law. "This is a government that is committed to the constitutional provisions, and in the constitution, any abuse of power is not allowed," government spokesman Bereket Simon told the U.S. government-funded broadcaster Voice of America.

In fact, the administration's official rhetoric was largely out of step with its actions, as noted in a 2008 human rights report issued by the U.S. State Department. "While the constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and press, the government did not respect these rights in practice," the report said.

The dichotomy was reflected in February, when the Ethiopian government issued a press release asserting the administration's commitment to "ensure the free flow of diverse ideas and information." That month, three editors of Amharic-language weeklies were detained by police for their coverage, including Wosenseged Gebrekidan of *Harambe*, who spent 18 days in custody because he could not post bail in a criminal libel case. The arrest appeared to violate Ethiopia's 2008 press law, which banned pretrial detention of journalists, according to CPJ research.

The government has had a longstanding practice of bringing trumped-up criminal cases against critical journalists, leaving the charges unresolved for years as a means of intimidating the defendants, and then reviving the cases at politically opportune moments, CPJ research shows. It continued the pattern in 2009. A judge sentenced editor Ibrahim Mohamed Ali of the Muslim-oriented newspaper *Salafiyya* to a year in prison in connection with a 2007 defamation charge related to a guest column criticizing the Ministry of Education's proposal to restrict headscarves for female Muslim students at public educational institutions, according to defense lawyer Temam Ababulgu. The same judge handed the same sentence to Asrat Wedajo, former editor of the now-defunct *Seife Nebelbal* newspaper, in connection with a 2004 "false news" charge. Wedajo's paper had run a story alleging human rights violations against the ethnic Oromos, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group.

In another case in May, Meleskachew Amaha, a freelancer with Voice of America, was imprisoned for two weeks on spurious tax charges related to his

involvement with private media group Addis Broadcasting Company in 2005, according to news reports and local journalists. Amaha was acquitted in July.

The arrests of journalists occurred in the context of waves of arrests of opposition party members, including outspoken opposition leader Birtukan Mideksa, who was jailed in December 2008 to serve a life sentence for contradicting government assertions about pardons given to political prisoners in 2005, according to news reports. Mideksa, who was one of the detainees, said the government had coerced statements of culpability from the prisoners.

Opposition political groups said hundreds of members were arrested in 2009, according to news reports, but government spokesman Simon denied the arrests were politically motivated. “Nobody has been imprisoned or killed for political activity, to my knowledge,” he told Reuters in November.

In a June interview with the *Financial Times*, Zenawi denied that the arrests of political dissidents and enactment of harsh legislation “contributed to an atmosphere where people do not feel free to speak.” He declared: “Have you read the local newspapers? Do they mince their words about the government?”

In reality, journalists with the handful of Amharic-language newspapers that covered current affairs worked under intense scrutiny of officials, government supporters, and the government-controlled media, according to CPJ research. Foreign journalists based in Addis Ababa, who worked under the constant threat of expulsion, were also affected by the government’s heavy hand. “When watched closely, you do tend to become very artful at balancing your pieces,” an international reporter told CPJ on the condition of anonymity.

Pointed coverage of sensitive topics routinely triggered accusations in the state media, threats, and government interrogations, according to local journalists. In November, for instance, the state daily *Addis Zemen* published columns accusing *Addis Neger* and *Awramba Times* of supporting banned political organizations and undermining national interests. *Addis Neger*, the leading independent political publication with a circulation of 30,000, announced in December it would halt publication “following legal and political harassment and intimidation by the Ethiopian government.” Five of its editors fled the country, citing fears of prosecution, according to news reports. At least 41 Ethiopian journalists have fled into exile this decade, according to CPJ research, although local groups say the number could be much higher.

The EPRDF further tightened its grip on the national public media and media regulatory agencies. In January, the government appointed administration spokesman Simon as board chairman of the national public broadcaster Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency, according to news reports. Simon’s deputy, Shimelis Kemal, formerly the chief government prosecutor who charged 15 journalists with antistate crimes in 2005, was in charge of the Ethiopian Broadcasting

Authority, overseeing the issuing of print media licenses.

The Broadcasting Authority, which is accountable to the prime minister, effectively became the government’s censorship arm as it issued restrictions against independent media. It immediately barred any media executive with more than 2 percent ownership share from assuming any editorial position, according to local news reports. In April, it denied licenses to three journalists imprisoned in 2005—award-winning publisher Serkalem Fasil; her husband, columnist Eskinder Nega; and publisher Sisay Agena—because of convictions against their now-dissolved publishing companies, according to local journalists. The same month, the authority briefly revoked the accreditations of VOA correspondents Eskinder Firew and Meleskachew Amaha, who had been jailed in May. Finally, in June, it ordered private Sheger Radio to stop carrying programs from VOA.

Authorities also continued to restrict Web sites discussing political dissent and other sensitive issues on the government-run national Internet service provider, the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation. In October, OpenNet Initiative—a research project on Internet censorship—released the findings of a study that named Ethiopia as the only country in sub-Saharan Africa with “consistent” and “substantial” filtering of Web sites, including CPJ’s site and two major blogging platforms, Blogger and Nazret.

GAMBIA

AUTHORITIES JAILED SIX JOURNALISTS AFTER THEIR PUBLICATIONS said President Yahya Jammeh had been insensitive in televised remarks about the unsolved 2004 murder of prominent Gambian editor Deyda Hydera. The six, convicted in August on baseless charges of sedition, were sentenced to two

years in prison but were freed in September after Jammeh, facing considerable domestic and international pressure, issued pardons.

The detainees included some of the nation’s leading journalists. Four were from Hydera’s paper, the private daily *The Point*: Managing Editor Pap Saine, News Editor Ebrima Sawaneh, and reporters Sarata Jabbi-Dibba

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Hydera murder unsolved; secrecy surrounds Manneh detention.
- » Domestic, international pressure prompts Jammeh to halt crackdown.

6

KEY STATISTIC

Journalists jailed for sedition after saying president’s remarks on Hydera case were insensitive.

and Pa Modou Faal. Also jailed were Sam Saar, editor of the private weekly *Foroyaa*, and one of the paper's reporters, Emil Touray.

The crackdown followed Jammeh's June 8 interview on state-run Gambia Radio and Television Service. Appearing on the program "One on One," the president denied government involvement in the Hydara murder and went as far as suggesting, without providing evidence, that the journalist had been having an extramarital affair, according to media reports. Noting that a news Web site had carried a headline asking "Who Killed Deyda Hydara?" Jammeh retorted, "Let them go and ask Deyda Hydara who killed him."

Astonished by the president's remarks, the Gambia Press Union issued a statement that criticized the president for insensitivity and called for a renewed investigation into Hydara's slaying. Both *The Point* and *Foroyaa* republished the union's statement about the case, which has generated no convictions and no apparent leads. A gunman in a passing taxicab shot Hydara, a regular critic of the government, as he was driving on the outskirts of Banjul in December 2004, according to two witnesses. Journalists have suspected a government connection in the slaying.

The union's statement and the papers' coverage triggered a series of retaliatory acts. As the six journalists were being rounded up, National Intelligence Agency (NIA) officers shut *The Point's* printing press for an edition and went hunting for other reporters and editors. Press union leader Buya Jammeh, *Foroyaa* journalist Fabakary Ceesay, and *Point* reporter Baboucarr Senghore were forced into hiding for a time after agents descended on their offices and homes, local journalists told CPJ. Two other journalists were briefly detained simply for covering the crackdown. Abubakr Saidykahn, a *Foroyaa* reporter, was arrested for trying to take photographs of agents arresting his editor, Saar. And *Point* reporter Augustine Kanja was detained for two days after he tried to film a scene outside court.

As the crackdown reached its height, President Jammeh threatened the six detained journalists in another state television appearance, according to media reports. "So they think they can hide behind so-called press freedom and violate the law and get away with it? They got it wrong this time," he was quoted as saying in the July interview. "We are going to prosecute them to the letter." He also referred to independent journalists as "rat pieces."

But Jammeh's government encountered a strong domestic and international response.

The press union, unbowed by the government's crackdown, condemned the president's remarks and noted that they illustrated the president's apparent control over the judiciary. Musa Saidykahn, an exiled Gambian journalist, wrote on the CPJ Blog that Jammeh "has overstepped his bounds by passing judgment on journalists. He has also proven the partiality of our already weakened judicial

system in which judges defend the president's interests."

International press freedom groups, including CPJ, mounted vigorous campaigns to free the six detained journalists. Ndey Sosseh, president of the Gambian Press Union, said the eventual release of the journalists was "100 percent due to public pressure." She credited pressure from the international community as well, particularly efforts undertaken by the U.S. and British governments. Perhaps most remarkable, *Foroyaa* columnist Halifa Sallah said, was the strong support shown by the Gambian public. "People came in droves to the court sessions, offered financial support," he said. "It was an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity."

If the Hydara slaying is a touchstone for journalists in the struggle for press freedom, so too is the 2006 disappearance of *Daily Observer* reporter "Chief" Ebrima Manneh. In July 2006, colleagues at the newspaper office said they witnessed two plainclothes NIA officers whisk Manneh away. He has been seen but a few times since. A fellow journalist reported seeing him on the grounds of Fato Prison in late 2006. The next year, witnesses told the Ghana-based press freedom group Media Foundation of West Africa that Manneh was being treated for high blood pressure at the Royal Victorian Teaching Hospital in Banjul.

Despite repeated calls by international groups, the government has refused to disclose Manneh's whereabouts, health, or legal status. It was uncertain whether Manneh even remained alive in 2009. Yet the case galvanized a variety of forces to press Gambian leaders for an explanation. In November, the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found Manneh's imprisonment unlawful and called on authorities to free him immediately. In April, U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin led a group of six colleagues in calling for Manneh's release. And in 2008, the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States ordered the government to release Manneh and compensate his family for an illegal detention.

For the first time, a government official was forced to publicly address questions about the Manneh case. Responding to questions from parliament in April, Attorney General and Justice Minister Marie Saine Firdaus said that to "the best of our knowledge, information, and belief, Chief Ebrima is not in our custody,"

The reason for Manneh's detention has never been made clear. Former *Daily Observer* reporter Pa Ousman Darboe, who witnessed Manneh's 2006 arrest, said his colleague was initially picked up because he had tried to republish a BBC story critical of Jammeh. Demba Jawo, a former president of the Gambian Press Union, said Manneh may have been further targeted for his reporting on the 2005 killing of Ghanaian immigrants in the Gambia.

Consistent government harassment has forced a steady stream of journalists into exile. CPJ research indicates that about 40 Gambian journalists have fled the

country since Jammeh came to power in a military coup in 1994.

Among those targeted throughout 2009 was Saine, a veteran Reuters correspondent in addition to being managing editor of *The Point*. Interrogated by police twice in February, he faced a series of accusations, from publishing “false” information to having false citizenship. The charges were not pursued.

Security agents detained Abdul Hamid Adiamoh, publisher and managing editor of the private daily *Today*, on June 10 for running a story that incorrectly reported the dismissal of two cabinet ministers, Adiamoh told CPJ. The paper apologized and retracted the story the following day. Nonetheless, police detained Adiamoh for five days on charges of “false” publication. He was eventually fined.

Even sports commentators faced harassment. On April 16, police in Serrekunda City questioned and briefly detained Limit FM commentators Moses Ndene and Kebba Yorro for criticizing the government’s handling of the country’s soccer league, the Media Foundation for West Africa reported.

MADAGASCAR

MALAGASY JOURNALISTS FACED CENSORSHIP, THREATS, AND ARREST as former president Marc Ravalomanana and new head of state Andry Rajoelina used their partisan media empires in a struggle for control of this Indian Ocean island nation. One journalist was killed in the midst of violent unrest.

Ravalomanana, halfway through his second, four-year term, faced increasing criticism over his management and policies. Contentious issues included the purchase of a US\$70 million presidential plane, poverty, violations of civil liberties, and concerns expressed by Madagascar’s international aid donors over the management of public finances, according to international news reports. Rajoelina, a brash, 34-year-old former disc jockey who was the mayor of the capital, Antananarivo, built support on such grievances and emerged as Ravalomanana’s chief rival. The two men, both self-made millionaires, increasingly clashed through their media outlets, setting off a protracted and deadly political crisis.

The seeds of the confrontation were planted in December 2008 when Information Ministry

officials and police forced Rajoelina’s television station, Viva, off the air after it broadcast an interview with another Ravalomanana rival, exiled former president Didier Ratsiraka, according to local journalists. The censorship, which would continue for three months, galvanized opposition to Ravalomanana. Illustrating the emergence of social media, hundreds of Malagasies joined a Facebook support group named “For the Reopening of Viva TV,” according to CPJ research.

The crisis deepened in January, when two unidentified attackers threw an explosive device at the home of Rolly Mercia, a commentator for sister station Viva Radio, according to local journalists. The blast caused minor damage and no injuries. On January 18, security forces seized Viva’s television transmitter, setting off another round of political volleys. Rajoelina called on supporters to protect Viva Radio, while Communications Minister Bruno Andriatavison accused the radio station of “inciting civil disobedience and undermining the public’s trust in the republic’s institutions,” according to news reports. Within days, government security agents fired on the transmitter of Viva Radio, disabling it in a pre-dawn raid, according to local journalists. In retaliation, hundreds of antigovernment demonstrators ransacked and burned the studios of state broadcasters Radio Nationale Malgache and Télévision Nationale Malgache, along with those of the Ravalomanana-owned Malagasy Broadcasting System.

Emboldened by public opposition to the president, Rajoelina proclaimed himself in charge of the country’s affairs and announced the formation of a parallel, “transitional” government in February, according to news reports. In response, Ravalomanana sacked Rajoelina from his post as mayor of the capital, prompting more protests. Members of the press increasingly found themselves pawns in the political struggle, unsure even what information was credible. “The situation is conducive to rumors. We don’t know which information is true anymore,” Viva Radio presenter Lalatiana Rakotondrazafy told CPJ in February.

Clashes between security forces and demonstrators that month claimed the life of a journalist, the first Malagasy reporter killed in connection with his work since CPJ began keeping detailed death records in 1992. Ando Ratovonirina, 26, a reporter and cameraman with the private broadcaster Radio Télévision Analamanga, was on assignment, carrying a notebook and sound equipment, as he accompanied opposition supporters toward the presidential palace on February 7, according to local journalists. Presidential guards opened fire on the marchers near the gates of the palace, and Ratovonirina was hit in the head by gunfire, according to colleague Mirindra Raparivelo, who was filming the scene.

The struggle between Ravalomanana and Rajoelina was increasingly fought tit for tat. In one five-day period in March, soldiers ransacked Viva’s studios, assailants attacked a reporter for a pro-Ravalomanana daily, and both sides threatened attacks on each other’s media facilities. But Ravalomanana was losing the

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Rival leaders use media empires to pursue political goals.
- » Partisan attacks target journalists, news outlets.

KEY STATISTIC

1 Journalist killed in 2009, the first Malagasy media fatality ever recorded by CPJ.

political battle. His support in the military having nearly evaporated, the embattled president handed power to a group of generals, who, pressed by their own mutinous officers, transferred authority to Rajoelina on March 17. The change in leadership led the African Union and the 15-nation Southern African Development Community to suspend Madagascar's membership and prompted Western countries to freeze aid, according to news reports.

Throughout the battle for power, partisan media outlets used their journalists to promote political goals, often exceeding ethical bounds. Viva Radio, for example, aired the names and addresses of people identified as "stealing" taxpayer money during the Ravalomanana regime, leading mobs to burn one home and attack a number of others. Transcripts of programs on the Ravalomanana-owned Radio Mada, reviewed by CPJ, included incendiary commentary that threatened retaliation against perceived opponents of the president. The few media outlets that sought to cover protests and other events in a neutral way were attacked by extremists from both sides.

Both the Ravalomanana and Rajoelina governments politicized news media policies. Within days of Rajoelina's takeover, new Communications Minister Augustin Andriamanoro declared in a press conference, "We must not confuse freedom with freedom to say or write anything." The absence of an independent media regulator exacerbated the problem. Legislation establishing an independent regulator, the Broadcasting High Council, had been enacted in 1994, but the council itself was never formed, according to local journalists. Under the law, council membership would have excluded officer holders and those engaging in political activity.

Regulators from Rajoelina's Communications Ministry, backed by soldiers, dismantled the transmitters of Radio Mada and Radio Fahazavana, a Christian station close to Ravalomanana, on April 19, according to news reports. Radio Mada presenter Evariste Ramanatsoavina was detained on May 4 and held for 16 days at Antanimora Prison, according to local journalists. A judge later convicted the journalist of "broadcasting false news" and fined him 1,000,000 ariary (US\$500) for relaying messages supporting the deposed president, according to defense lawyer Fidele Rakotondrainibe.

As Ravalomanana remained in exile, his supporters, who called themselves "legalists" for opposing Rajoelina's takeover as an anticonstitutional coup, organized continued protests. In November, after months of talks, political leaders agreed to form a transitional government until elections scheduled for 2010, according to news reports. Under the agreement, Rajoelina would remain head of state but share some power with Ravalomanana and two former presidents. In late year, the African Union and the Southern African Development Community maintained Madagascar's suspension, and most international donors continued to withhold support.

The political crisis was a proving ground for emerging Malagasy news Web sites such as *Sobika*, *Topmada*, and *Madatsara*, said blogger Lova Rakotomalala, co-founder of the Foko Blog Club, which trains Malagasies in citizen journalism. "With intense political tensions and commercial interests at stake, a lot of the information carried in traditional media during the crisis was either manipulated or incomplete," Rakotomalala wrote on the CPJ Blog in July. Internet penetration is very small in Madagascar—in the low single digits—but international news outlets did pick up a number of reports from online news sources. Some Web sites reported harassment; among them was *Topmada*, which suspended coverage for about two months in the face of threats.

NIGER

IN AN AUDACIOUS BID TO MAINTAIN POWER, PRESIDENT MAMADOU TANDJA pushed through constitutional amendments repealing presidential term limits and tightening his control of the state media regulatory agency. Facing heavy criticism in the run-up to an August referendum on the constitutional changes, the Tandja administration silenced dissent by imprisoning critics, intimidating news media, and issuing an emergency decree dissolving both the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court. Official results showed that the amend-

ments passed with 92 percent approval, but opposition politicians and their supporters had boycotted the vote, which they called a mockery of the constitution.

In the months leading up to the referendum, Niger's Constitutional Court twice declared that Tandja's effort to eliminate presidential term limits was incompatible with the 1999 constitution, leading members of the National Assembly to consider impeach-

ment. But Tandja—the 71-year-old former army colonel who was nearing the end of what would have been his second and final five-year term in office—responded in June with emergency decrees that swept away these official obstacles by disbanding both the court and the assembly.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Tandja tightens grip on power, media through constitutional changes.
- » Journalists reporting on corruption face government reprisals.

KEY STATISTIC

3 Years beyond his elected term that Tandja can serve, according to a constitutional change.

Heavy criticism in the independent press generated a similar presidential response. On July 8, Tandja issued a decree giving the president of the media regulatory agency, the High Council on Communications, full authority to take punitive steps against any news outlet perceived as harming a vaguely defined national security standard, according to local journalists and news reports. The decree contravened normal council procedures that required consultation among the full membership and the issuance of a formal warning before any disciplinary action could be taken, according to legal experts.

The Niger Association of Independent Press Editors, representing 60 newspapers, 23 radio stations, and four television stations, tried to protest the authoritarian measures by imposing a weeklong news blackout beginning July 20. The government, apparently seeking to talk past its critics, responded by inviting journalists from outside Niger to come and report on pending public construction projects that Tandja had made focal points of his bid to stay in power. About 30 foreign journalists from state and private media outlets accepted the invitation.

Many private media outlets chose not to cover the referendum on the constitutional changes. Journalists such as Ali Idrissa, deputy director-general of Dounia, a private radio and television broadcaster, told CPJ that they had been warned by the Interior Ministry and the president of the High Council on Communications not to air interviews with those boycotting the referendum. Moussa Aksar, editor of the weekly *L'Évènement*, expressed great disappointment in the Tandja administration's heavy-handed actions. "We chose this job of journalist so that democracy can take hold in this country," he said. "This takes us backwards."

The constitutional changes extended Tandja's term, which was due to expire in December, by three years, and allowed him to seek indefinite re-election. The president further consolidated power on the Constitutional Court and in the National Assembly. The court was reconstituted in July with new presidential appointees, according to news reports. In an October election to replace the assembly, the ruling party won two-thirds of the assembly's 113 seats. The voting was largely boycotted by the opposition.

The constitutional changes also remade the High Council on Communications into a seven-member body, four of whose members are to be presidential appointees. (The other members are to be nominated by the communications minister and the speakers of the National Assembly and Senate.) The new format gave Tandja majority control of an agency that had previously included 11 members, five of them presidential appointees. "With such [membership], we are certain that many press outlets will be closed," said Boubacar Diallo, head of the Niger Association of Independent Press Editors. By late year, most of the new members had been appointed according to the new provisions.

The High Council on Communications had assembled a record of repres-

sive actions over the years, but its members had also asserted some level of independence. Earlier in 2009, six members publicly opposed Council President Daouda Diallo's effort to ban Dounia, a broadcaster known for its favorable coverage of exiled politician Hama Amadou. Speaking to CPJ, Diallo accused Dounia of broadcasting a "call for insurrection" by airing statements opposing the constitutional changes. The six members said in a statement that Diallo had acted improperly by imposing the ban unilaterally. A High Court judge agreed and rescinded the ban against Dounia on July 2.

Tandja's bid to stay in office exacerbated longstanding tension between the independent press and the government—a strain fueled by years of censorship, criminal prosecutions, and imprisonments of journalists covering sensitive issues. Coverage of corruption, particularly in the management of Niger's natural resources, drew harsh government responses in 2009.

In early August, just days before the referendum, police questioned editors of eight private newspapers that detailed leaked documents purporting to show that profits from uranium mining had been funneled to President Tandja's son, Hadia. In a separate case in April, Dounia Director General Abibou Garba was charged with criminal defamation and broadcasting false news after his station aired a debate in which an activist described a uranium deal between the French nuclear energy company AREVA and the government as the "looting of Niger's resources." The case was pending in late year.

The arrests undercut Tandja's public pledges to fight entrenched graft. Niger ranked poorly—115th among 180 countries—in terms of corruption, according to Transparency International's 2008 public corruption index. The private press regularly reported on alleged mismanagement of public institutions, often at the cost of imprisonment and harassment. In January, Editor Boussada Ben Ali of the weekly *L'Action* was jailed in connection with a story alleging that the Finance Ministry had awarded a medical supply contract without open bidding. A judge convicted Ali of "divulging information likely to undermine public order" and sentenced him to three months in prison. When Ali's lawyer, Yahouza Amani, publicly criticized the ruling, he was arrested and detained for 24 hours for "discrediting a justice decision," local journalists said. In a separate case in September, Editor Ibrahim Soumana Gaoh of the private weekly *Le Témoin* spent nine days in prison over a story accusing former Communications Minister Mohamed Ben Omar of involvement in an embezzlement scheme at the national telecommunications company SONITEL.

The case of another imprisoned journalist, Abdoulaye Tiémogo, editor of the weekly *Le Canard Déchainé*, illustrated the government's determination to persecute critical journalists. Tiémogo had been arrested at least three times and had gone into hiding in fear of arrest at least once during this decade, according to CPJ research.

On August 1, Tiémogo was detained yet again in connection with stories alleging corruption. In a surprising twist, though, a judge convicted the journalist on an unrelated charge of “casting discredit on a judicial ruling” in connection with a televised interview that discussed the government’s effort to arrest and extradite the exiled politician Amadou, according to defense lawyer Marc Le Bihan. Tiémogo’s health deteriorated in prison; he was hospitalized in August after contracting malaria and collapsing once in his cell, according to local journalists. While recovering at a hospital in the capital, Niamey, he was suddenly transferred to a remote prison in Ouallam, 55 miles (90 kilometers) north of Niamey, his wife, Zeïnabou Tiémogo, told CPJ. Abdourahamane Ousmane, president of the local Network of Journalists for Human Rights, told CPJ that the prison choice reflected the government’s desire to isolate Tiémogo from his family and deter adequate medical attention. CPJ advocated on behalf of Tiémogo, urging the government to provide more humane treatment. On October 26, an appeals court judge reduced Tiémogo’s sentence and set him free, according to local journalists.

NIGERIA

WITH 21 NATIONAL DAILIES, 12 TELEVISION STATIONS, AND SEVERAL emerging online news sources, Nigeria continued to boast one of the most vibrant news media cultures on the continent. But a series of attacks fanned fears in the press corps and prompted self-censorship.

An editor who covered sensitive political news was murdered at his home outside Lagos, while local operatives with the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) assaulted journalists with impunity in a series of episodes, some of which occurred in government buildings. The attacks had Nigerian journalists talking already about the potential pressures they could face in the 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections. The PDP has held power with little difficulty since the country returned to civilian rule in 1999, but opposition parties have talked about uniting in 2011, a step that would make the contests more competitive—and more challenging to cover.

Nigeria has been relatively free of deadly violence against the press during this decade, but journalists were startled by a killing on a Sunday morning in September. Six assailants arrived at the doorstep of Bayo Ohu, an assistant editor and political reporter for the private daily *The Guardian*, and shot him several times, according to news reports and relatives. The attackers took his cell phone and one of his two laptops. The Nigerian Union of Journalists said it believed Ohu had been slain for his reporting. He had recently examined allegations of fraud in the Customs Department and had covered a contentious gubernatorial

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Local operatives of the ruling PDP assault journalists with impunity.
- » Editor slain at his home outside Lagos. Wife pledges to continue his work.

21

KEY STATISTIC
National dailies, a number reflecting Nigeria’s robust media climate.

election in southwest Ekiti state. His widow, Blessing, told CPJ that she would carry on Ohu’s work. “This is my reason to go into journalism—to find out why he was killed and to continue reporting those things that his killers did not want reported,” she said. Two suspects were detained in late October, but no motive was immediately disclosed.

Spring elections in Ekiti were marked by several reports of violence and obstruction. In April, PDP operatives roughed up three photographers and damaged their equipment at a police roadblock near the home of Sen. Ayo Arise in Oyo-Ekiti, said one of the journalists, Segun Bakare of *The Punch*. The same month, Nigeria’s broadcast regulator, the National Broadcasting Commission, fined the private radio Adaba FM 500,000 naira (US\$3,350) for transmitting content that it said incited public violence.

The most egregious attack occurred in the Government House in the state capital, Ado-Ekiti, where supporters of PDP Gov. Segun Oni assaulted three reporters who arrived to interview a campaign manager. One of the reporters, Ozim Gospel of the *National Guide*, said the April attack occurred after the journalists had come upon Oni supporters filling out what seemed to be fraudulent ballots. The reporters, who filed a complaint with authorities, required hospital treatment for their injuries, and much of their equipment was destroyed. A witness recorded the attack and posted it on YouTube. Oni won re-election in the Ekiti balloting. No arrests had been made in the Government House attack by late year.

A similar assault was reported at the Government House in southeast Imo state in September. A security agent used his shoe to beat Radio Nigeria correspondent Wale Olukun in the presence of the state government’s press secretary, according to news reports and local journalists. Three other agents joined in the assault, Olukun told CPJ. The journalist said he had recently aired a report about a visually impaired youth who protested perceived shortcomings in public services.

Reporting in the volatile, oil-rich Niger Delta was exceptionally difficult in the first half of 2009 amid fighting between government forces and militants demanding a greater local share in oil revenue, the editor of the private weekly *National Point*, Ibiba Don Pedro, told CPJ. Sowore Omoyele, publisher of the news Web site *Sahara Reporters*, said few reporters risked firsthand coverage during that period. “The government told the local press they could not guarantee their

protection amid the violence, so most kept away and relied on press statements issued by the warring parties,” Omoyele said.

Conditions in the Niger Delta improved slightly in June after the government granted amnesty to some of the local militants, allowing more firsthand coverage, several journalists told CPJ. But security forces continued to harass and intimidate reporters perceived as being critical, leading to ongoing self-censorship, they said. In November, security forces detained three journalists for two days on charges of “false publication” in their coverage of a conflict between Port Harcourt residents and soldiers, local journalists told CPJ. Developments in the region have vast local repercussions because of environmental and health degradation caused by oil production. The region also has significant international impact given the extent of the reserves there. Nigeria is Africa’s leading oil producer.

Internet penetration was estimated at just 7 percent in 2009, according to Internet World Statistics, a market research company, but online publications started to break stories that influenced traditional media. Shu’aibu Usman, national secretary of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, told CPJ that newspapers were now republishing or following up on stories that first appeared online. Some print editors faced government scrutiny about those stories. Police in the northern Kano state questioned Tukur Mamu, editor of the private weekly *Desert Herald*, in July after he reprinted a story from the online *Sahara Reporters* about an unsolved murder, the journalist told CPJ. Mamu was released the next day. He was detained again in October after the paper published its own article claiming the president’s wife had assumed oversight of some government construction contracts, he said. On both occasions, Mamu noted, agents interrogated him about his relationship with the online *Sahara Reporters*.

Some journalists blamed media owners for allowing political pressure to unduly influence content. Usman, the journalist union secretary, said ownership is largely in the hands of “politicians or businessmen who allow their personal concerns to dominate their publications.” In October, President Umaru Yar’Adua threatened to revoke the license of Africa Independent Television, citing “threats to national security” that apparently stemmed from the station’s political talk show, “Focus Nigeria,” according to local news reports. The station soon replaced the show’s popular moderator, Gbenga Arulegba, who was known for his provocative style. AIT Chairman Raymond Dokpesi said government pressure had nothing to do with the move.

But one newspaper dealt Yar’Adua a setback in court. In June, the Court of Appeal ruled the president could not pursue a defamation complaint against the private daily *Leadership* until he left office, according to news reports. The complaint stemmed from a November 2008 report in *Leadership* saying that the president had been ill, *Leadership* Executive Director Aniebo Nwamu said.

SOMALIA

SOMALIA WAS AMONG THE WORLD’S DEADLIEST COUNTRIES IN 2009, surpassing violent hot spots such as Iraq and Pakistan. As conflict continued between the weak Transitional Federal Government and multiple insurgent groups, nine journalists were killed in direct connection to their work, seven of them in the volatile capital, Mogadishu. An exodus of local journalists continued throughout the year, and few international journalists dared travel into the country for firsthand reporting, according to CPJ research. As a result, the amount and quality of news coverage of Somalia’s political and humanitarian crisis suffered greatly, CPJ found.

Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, considered a moderate Islamic politician, was elected president in January after peace talks in Djibouti, but the vote did little to foster peace. The two main insurgent groups, Al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islam, accused Sharif of being a puppet of Western governments. Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden denounced the new president in a recorded statement in March and urged militant groups to topple him, according to news reports. Al-Shabaab, which has reported links to Al-Qaeda, took control of most of southern Somalia by May, including areas within a mile of the presidential palace in Mogadishu.

Twenty-one journalists were killed in Somalia between 2005 and 2009, but only about half died in cross-fire during combat situations. The others were targeted by assassins and murdered. As insurgents drew ever closer to the capital in 2009, conditions for journalists there continued to deteriorate, particularly in the volatile Bakara Market district where major media houses Radio Shabelle and HornAfrik radio were based. “They will kill a journalist simply for being a journalist,” said Farhan Ali, who served as minister of information during a portion of 2009, part of an ever-changing cast of federal government officials.

The press faced grave dangers from multiple sources. On the first day of 2009, Shabelle reporter Hassan Mayow was shot twice in the head by suspected government soldiers in Afgoye, a town roughly 25 kilometers (15 miles) west of Mogadishu. According to local journalists who witnessed the murder and spoke

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Al-Shabaab terrorizes media through violence, threats, censorship.
- » Many local journalists flee into exile, leaving a void in coverage.

KEY STATISTIC

9 Journalists killed in direct relation to their work in 2009.

to CPJ, soldiers stopped Mayow on his way to a press conference and accused him of collaborating with insurgent groups before shooting him. Ahmed Abdisalam, who started the year as information minister, said the government would investigate. But Abdisalam was soon out of a job, and no investigation materialized.

The perilous conditions in Mogadishu's Bakara Market and the ruthlessness of insurgents were on display in February when Said Tahlil Ahmed, managing director of HornAfrik, was murdered. Masked assailants shot Tahlil as he and several other journalists walked through the market to a press conference organized by Al-Shabaab. Local journalists told CPJ that Al-Shabaab had summoned journalists to express its disapproval of local coverage of the presidential election, which it had dismissed as illegitimate. A spokesman for Al-Shabaab denied responsibility for the attack.

Tahlil, colleagues said, had hoped the presidential election would be a turning point for Somalia and that journalists would be able to carry out their work unharmed. Freelance journalist Sahal Abdulle said Tahlil had insisted on attending the press conference as a way to encourage the local press corps to carry out its work even in the face of danger.

Shabelle reporter Abdirisak Warsame also lost his life in Bakara Market. The recently married journalist, described as a workaholic by colleagues, was shot in crossfire between Al-Shabaab insurgents and government soldiers as he was walking to the station for his morning broadcast, local journalists told CPJ. Shabelle lost yet another veteran journalist in June when unidentified gunmen targeted and murdered Director Mukhtar Hirabe and wounded News Editor Ahmed Hashi, also in Bakara Market.

Radio Shabelle and HornAfrik have suffered extraordinary losses in recent years, CPJ research shows. Five Shabelle journalists were killed between 2005 and 2009; two HornAfrik staff members and two journalists working for a HornAfrik affiliate, Capital Voice, died during that same time period.

The shooting of Hirabe appeared to be retaliation by Al-Shabaab for his refusal to provide the insurgent group with a monthly payment of motor fuel, Shabelle Chairman Abdimaalik Yusuf told CPJ. In the aftermath of the Hirabe killing, Shabelle's executive board appointed a committee to manage the station, but did not disclose the members' names in hopes of protecting their lives, Yusuf said. But the station soon received a phone call from insurgents threatening the new managers by name. "There is no single hour of the day passing without a threatening call from Al-Shabaab to Shabelle radio. They always call to censor any item that they deem to be critical to them," Yusuf said.

The death of Hirabe, a popular and well-regarded journalist, reverberated across the Somalia media community. "I know that his passing will leave a void in the Somali media, in the hearts of all those who knew him," former Shabelle online

editor Bashir Nur wrote on the CPJ Blog. Fifteen journalists, primarily editors and producers for media outlets in the capital, met in June and announced they were suspending their work over security concerns. "We can no longer operate independently and impartially, and our lives are in danger because of the chaotic situation in our country," said a statement signed by the journalists. Some of these journalists left the country soon after; others resumed working after a hiatus.

Two journalists from Radio IQK, a station that focuses on Islamic issues, were killed in crossfire. Veteran reporter Nur Muse Hussein died of injuries in May, a month after being struck by two shots to his right leg. The reporter was covering clashes between militia groups in the central town of Beledweyn. One of the most senior journalists working in the region, Hussein had started his career in 1970 as a journalist for the Somali National News Agency, local journalists told CPJ. A second Radio IQK journalist, Mohamud Mohamed Yusuf, was struck by crossfire after leaving an affiliate in northern Mogadishu in July, local journalists told CPJ. Heavy shelling prevented anyone from attending to Yusuf for three hours, the National Union of Somali Journalists said.

In December, three journalists were killed in a suicide bomb attack at a Benadir University graduation ceremony in the capital. In all, the explosion claimed the lives of at least 23 people, including four top government officials, according to news reports. Hassan Zubeyr, a cameraman for Al-Arabiya television, and Mohamed Amin, a Radio Shabelle reporter, were pronounced dead at the scene. Abdulkhafar Abdulkadir, a freelancer, died at a local hospital later in the day. Al-Shabaab was suspected of carrying out the attack, local journalists said.

With Al-Shabaab in control of most of the country, censorship of broadcast content and the closing of radio stations escalated across Somalia. In September, an Al-Shabaab "information officer" in the southern town of Belet-Hawo barred radio stations from airing music, criticizing the militant group, and interviewing federal government officials. Militants later stormed Belet-Hawo's Radio Maandeeq, confiscating equipment and forcing the station off the air. In the south-central town of Baidoa, militants closed two stations in October. One, Radio Warsan, resumed broadcasting a month later but was forced to air Al-Shabaab propaganda, its director said. The other, Radio Jubba, remained off the air in late year. In the southwest port of Merca, Al-Shabaab ordered journalists at Radio Shabelle's regional station to provide it with broadcast material in advance so it could be screened. Shabelle, fearing the affiliate would be overtaken by Al-Shabaab, dismantled the Merca station in July.

The government also harassed foreign news media. Police raided the offices of Al-Arabiya television in Mogadishu in August, confiscating mobile phones and camera equipment, station manager Hassan Subeyr told CPJ.

Kidnapped journalists Amanda Lindhout, a Canadian, and Nigel Brennan,

an Australian, were freed in November after 15 months in captivity. News reports said relatives had paid a ransom. In an interview with the Canadian broadcaster CTV, Lindhout said the captors had beaten and tortured her. “It was extremely oppressive. I was kept by myself at all times. I had no one to speak to. I was normally kept in a room with a light, no window. I had nothing to write on or with. There was very little food,” she told CTV.

One journalist was reported kidnapped in 2009: Universal TV Director Ibrahim Mohamed was seized along the road from Afgoye to Mogadishu, Universal newscaster Ahmed Tooya said. Mohamed was freed five days later unharmed, Tooya said, and the reason for the kidnapping was not established.

Kidnappings and deadly violence proved powerful deterrents to international journalists. “There are now almost no foreign correspondents visiting Somalia,” Paul Salopek, a veteran correspondent, told CPJ. “The net result is one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world is more invisible than ever.” Most international media organizations did not permanently assign correspondents to Mogadishu, relying instead on reports from local Somali journalists—who themselves were diminishing in numbers.

CPJ research shows at least 30 journalists have fled Somalia in recent years after facing work-related violence or persecution. Somali journalists and organizations, however, said the number may be much higher. Abdulkadir Ahmed, a former Radio Shabelle reporter who started a union of exiled Somali journalists, said more than 60 Somali journalists had moved to nearby Kenya and Uganda. Politicians, too, fled in high numbers, leaving barely enough to field a quorum in parliament.

In comparison to the rest of the country, the semi-autonomous republic of Puntland remained relatively stable under the leadership of President Abdirahman Mohamed who said in a January press conference that he would “uphold freedom of the press as a cornerstone of good governance.” Despite those comments, online journalist Jama Ayanle was imprisoned in March on the orders of the deputy police commissioner, the journalist told CPJ. A judge in the port town of Bossaso sentenced Ayanle, a reporter for the news Web sites *Laasqoray* and *Dayniile* to a two-year sentence for “insulting Puntland leaders.” No details supporting the charge were disclosed; Ayanle was freed on a presidential pardon after serving 20 days.

The government of the breakaway northern republic of Somaliland cracked down on the independent press throughout the year. As the ruling party prepared for elections—which were repeatedly postponed—critical reporting was deemed a criminal offense by a politicized judiciary, local journalists told CPJ. Reporters working for the *Baadiyenews* and *Berberanews* Web sites were briefly detained by police.

The government’s main target, however, was the Dutch-based Radio Horyaal. In July, Managing Director Mohamed Osman and News Editor Ahmed Dhuhul

were arrested and accused of inciting violence for reporting on a conference between the president and clan elders regarding a land dispute. The two were eventually released on bail after 15 days at Somaliland’s Criminal Investigation Department in Hargeisa. Police arrested Osman again in September outside parliament and detained him for five days without charge, Horyaal reporter Abdirizan Dubad told CPJ. Police in the central town of Burao also arrested Radio Horyaal reporter Fowsi Suleiman and detained him for 22 days without charge.

UGANDA

VIOLENT PROTESTS BROKE OUT IN KAMPALA IN SEPTEMBER WHEN security forces blocked leaders of the traditional kingdom of the Baganda, Uganda’s largest ethnic group, from visiting Kayunga district for a planned rally, according to local news reports. More than 25 people were killed and 846 people arrested in two days of clashes that underscored political tensions between the government and the kingdom, according to official figures reported in the press.

The Human Rights Network for Journalists, a local press freedom organization, said it had documented more than 20 cases in which security forces and rioters attacked or harassed reporters, particularly photojournalists. In one case, plainclothes security agents whisked away Nation TV Uganda journalist Tony Muwangala and forced him at gunpoint to delete footage taken during the riots, Muwangala told CPJ. The same day, troops briefly detained at gunpoint a team of *Monitor* journalists, according to the newspaper.

During the violence, citizen journalists in Kampala and beyond provided real-time coverage of the unfolding clashes, according to *Global Voices* blogger

Rebekah Heacock, who specializes in access-to-information issues in East Africa. “Within 24 hours of the first violence, volunteers in Kampala launched *Uganda Witness*, a crisis reporting site,” which published 45 separate SMS text-message reports of violence in four days, Heacock wrote on the CPJ Blog. Using Twitter, Kampala Web developer Solomon King and journalist Tumwiju Mutambuka posted information

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Reporters attacked, harassed during Kampala unrest.
- » Criminal cases pile up as high court considers constitutional challenge.

22

KEY STATISTIC

Criminal cases pending against Andrew Mwenda, a top political editor.

on where rioters and security forces were gathering and which journalists had been detained. Heacock attributed the significant real-time coverage to “increased availability of the Internet and Internet-connected mobile phones.”

Within hours of the rioting, agents of the government-run Uganda Broadcasting Council, often backed by troops, disabled the transmission equipment of the Buganda kingdom-controlled Central Broadcasting Service (CBS), vernacular talk station Radio Two, which is commonly referred to as Akaboozi, Catholic Church-run Radio Sapientia, and commercial, youth-oriented Ssubi FM. The Buganda kingdom is the largest of several traditional kingdoms in Uganda that have largely cultural roles, but remain politically influential.

In a statement, Council Chairman Godfrey Mutabazi accused the stations of inciting violence and breaching “minimum broadcasting standards.” The council lifted the ban on Sapientia a few days later and Akaboozi in November, but revoked the licenses of two CBS stations and indefinitely banned popular radio talk shows commonly known as “bimeeza,” for alleged technical shortcomings. Six presenters were banned from the air for breaching unspecified “minimum broadcasting standards.”

Herbert Mukasa Lumansi, vice president of the Uganda Journalists Association, condemned the station closings, but said there was “a lot of unprofessionalism because some radio stations are using DJs or relatives without qualifications to moderate programs.” Authorities exploited this perception at politically convenient times. In August, President Yoweri Museveni lashed out at an audience of Uganda’s National Association of Broadcasters, accusing journalists of unethical reporting. “You mostly lie and incite,” he said, according to the state-run daily *New Vision*. “I have so much evidence to prove all this.” The administration said it would take “very serious” steps against media outlets seen as inciting public discontent with the government, he added.

While radio stations offered forums for free expression, they lagged behind newspapers and television in current affairs coverage, according to Rachel Mugarura Mutana, head of the independent Uganda Radio Network. The more than 40 radio stations in Uganda, a majority of which were owned by political figures with ties to power, produced mostly music and religious programming due to financial constraints, she said.

Print and television journalists continued to face police interrogations and arrests on charges of defamation, sedition, and “promoting sectarianism,” even though trial judges have stayed the prosecution of such cases while the Supreme Court considers a constitutional challenge. Andrew Mwenda, editor of *The Independent* and a 2008 recipient of CPJ’s International Press Freedom Award, and the East African Media Institute have argued that penal code provisions on sedition, sectarianism, and criminal defamation contravene Article 29 of Uganda’s

constitution, which guarantees free speech and free press. The case, first brought in 2002, remained pending in late year.

Mwenda, who already faced 21 separate criminal counts in connection with critical coverage dating to his years as a journalist with *Monitor*, was charged again with sedition in September. This time, a magistrate charged Mwenda and Editor-in-Chief Charles Bichachi in connection with a cartoon in their monthly newsmagazine *The Independent*. The cartoon spoofed Museveni’s decision to reappoint Badru Kiggundu, chairman of Uganda’s electoral commission during the flawed 2006 presidential polls, to supervise the 2011 vote. The trial was indefinitely suspended pending the outcome of the constitutional challenge, according to defense lawyer Bob Kasango.

Another prominent journalist was charged with six counts of sedition. Kalundi Robert Sserumaga, a commentator on a weekly television show on Wavah Broadcasting Services, was imprisoned for three days after harshly criticizing Museveni’s policies, according to local journalists. The host of the show, Peter Kibazo, told CPJ that security agents picked up Sserumaga after the program on September 11 and threw him into the trunk of a car. Sserumaga was eventually released on bail; his trial, too, was suspended pending the constitutional challenge, according to local journalists.

The government targeted *Monitor* journalists for their critical coverage of sensitive topics. In January, the paper quoted unnamed military sources criticizing Museveni’s management of an international security operation against Joseph Kony, the rebel leader of the Christian guerrilla Lord’s Resistance Army. In response, the Ugandan police Media Offences Department repeatedly interrogated senior reporters Angelo Izama and Grace Matsiko on accusations of endangering national security but did not charge them.

In August, the *Monitor* reproduced a presidential memorandum discussing a new government policy on land and political rights in Uganda’s oil-rich western region of Bunyoro. Government spokeswoman Kabakumba Matsiko did not dispute the content, but accused the *Monitor* of misrepresenting the memo “as if it was a final decision.” The paper published a correction shortly afterward, acknowledging some errors in reproducing the memo, but a magistrate charged Managing Editor David Kalinaki and Sunday Editor Henry Ochieng with forgery, according to defense lawyer James Nangwala. The case was pending in late year.

Two other *Monitor* journalists faced prosecution on various criminal charges linked to their coverage of government affairs, according to CPJ research. In July, a magistrate charged *Monitor* photojournalist Stephen Otago with trespassing; he was arrested on the order of Inspector General of Government Faith Mwonda after taking photographs of her outside a courthouse, according to local journalists.

And in August, a magistrate in the northern city of Gulu charged *Monitor*

journalist Moses Akena with libel over a story reporting allegations of local government corruption, according to defense lawyer Judith Oroma. The Akena matter joined the long list of cases that were stayed pending a Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of the charge.

ZAMBIA

PRESS FREEDOM DETERIORATED IN THE FIRST FULL YEAR OF RUIPAH BANDA'S presidency. Tensions mounted between Banda's government and the leading independent daily *The Post*. Politicized criminal charges were leveled at *Post* staff members concerning the circulation of photos that Banda labeled "obscene" but others saw as a shocking look at a government health-care problem. Ruling party supporters were tied to a series of attacks against *The Post* and other journalists.

CPJ documented seven cases in which supporters of the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) harassed or beat *Post* reporters while they worked. *The Post* claimed in a July report that the MMD had gone as far as assigning operatives to harass its reporters at state functions. The government sent mixed messages in response. While Banda and other officials condemned the attacks in one breath, they appeared to encourage hostility toward *The Post* in the next. "*The Post* newspaper is reaping what it sowed because you cannot have a newspaper that reports negatively about the republican president most of the time," Information Minister Ronnie Shikapwasha said at a May press conference.

The attacks targeted a range of media employees. A *Post* vendor, Deaven Mwanamwale, was assaulted and his papers were confiscated in May in Solwezi, capital of North Western province, the newspaper reported. In July, MMD supporters assaulted reporters for *The Post* and the state-run *Times of Zambia* who were at Lusaka International Airport to cover a presidential trip to Uganda, according to news accounts and the Zambian Union of Journalists.

Roughly 400 journalists, civil society members, and

students gathered the next month at Olympia Park in the capital, Lusaka, to protest the violence, said Henry Kabwe, Zambia chairman of the Media Institute of Southern Africa. Vice President George Kunda assured the gathering that the assailants would be prosecuted, according to local journalists. Later that month, MMD Lusaka Youth Chairman Chris Chalwe was arrested on charges related to the airport assault. The case was pending in late year.

Banda, a government veteran and former vice president, succeeded President Levy Mwanawasa, who died of a stroke in August 2008. Banda went on to win election in his own right in October 2008, but his initial months in office were marked by animosity toward the press. Banda appeared to take particular offense to coverage in *The Post*. In February, addressing an MMD function, Banda claimed the daily was acting as an opposition movement, according to local news reports. "*The Post* newspaper has attacked me from the time you chose me as your presidential candidate," he was quoted as saying.

Banda's government took a broader swipe at press freedom in early year, announcing that it would give press representatives six months to set up a self-regulatory body or it would draft a media regulation bill with unspecified provisions. A group of state and private media representatives told the government it would draft a self-regulatory plan but would need considerably more time, Kabwe said. The issue was pending in late year.

Other, progressive legislation was stalled. The Independent Broadcasting Authority Act, which would create an independent broadcast regulator, and the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Act, which would convert the state-run broadcasting company into an independent public broadcaster, were passed by parliament in 2002 but never implemented. The Media Institute of Southern Africa and journalists called on the government to follow through on the legislation, and urged parliament to act on a freedom of information bill that was introduced several years ago.

State-run media dominate in Zambia. The country has three dailies—two state-owned and one independent—and three private weeklies. The broadcasting industry has expanded, but the state-run Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation dominates the market due to its superior signal, local journalists told CPJ. Kabwe said the government typically places strict signal limitations on broadcast licenses. Five private TV stations broadcast from the capital but their reach is limited. Roughly 30 local and community radio stations dot the countryside, but Radio Christian Voice and the state broadcaster have dominant signals. In September, the Information Ministry denied a request from the private station Phoenix FM to stream its broadcasts online.

In November, a Lusaka magistrate acquitted *Post* News Editor Chansa Kabwela on baseless obscenity charges in a case that drew international attention. Kabwela

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Ruling party supporters behind assaults against journalists.
- » Government wages politicized prosecutions against *The Post*.

KEY STATISTIC

400

Estimated turnout at a demonstration protesting anti-press attacks.

had been arrested in June after circulating unpublished photographs of a woman giving birth without medical aid outside the University Teaching Hospital, which was involved in a health care worker strike at the time, the newspaper reported.

Kabwela sent the photos to the vice president, the minister of health, the cabinet secretary, the archbishop of Lusaka, and two civil society groups, along with a letter urging that the strike be settled. After learning of the photos, Banda denounced them as pornography and said, “Shame on you, photographer, who took pictures of our mothers naked.”

The photos had been taken by the woman’s husband, who gave them to *The Post* because he believed what had happened should not occur again, according to Sam Mujida, the paper’s deputy manager. Mujida said that editors had decided that the pictures were too graphic for publication but that it was important to raise awareness among government and civic leaders about the human impact of the strike. The infant died shortly after birth, according to news accounts.

In a November interview with CPJ, Kabwela called the acquittal a vindication. “I’ve been demonized as if I was insensitive to issues of culture and privacy,” she said, adding that she was gratified by “overwhelming support” from domestic and international audiences. The outpouring included Facebook support groups that attracted several hundred backers.

The Post faced legal harassment on a related front. A magistrate charged Fred M’membe, the paper’s editor-in-chief and a 1995 recipient of CPJ’s International Press Freedom Award, with contempt of court in connection with an August opinion piece about the Kabwela case, according to defense lawyer Remmy Main-sa. A U.S.-based contributor, Cornell University law professor Muna Nduko, had criticized the prosecution in the opinion piece. M’membe pleaded not guilty, and the case was pending in late year.

ZIMBABWE

IN A MEASURE OF THE DEPLORABLE STATE OF PRESS FREEDOM IN ZIMBABWE, a year marked by harassment and obstruction was considered a small step forward. “Journalists continue to be followed, detained, and abducted; phones and e-mail messages are intercepted; the output of news from government reminds one of Radio Moscow during the Soviet era,” Geoff Hill, exiled Zimbabwean journalist and author, told CPJ.

“Nevertheless, compared with a year ago, things are better,” Hill said.

After months of foot-dragging and obstruction, the long-ruling ZANU-PF party led by President Robert Mugabe formed a coalition government in January with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Desperate for

foreign aid, the new government deployed Morgan Tsvangirai, the MDC leader and prime minister, to tour the globe in June to seek financial assistance and the lifting of sanctions. His efforts were often undermined by Mugabe’s dismissal of international demands that he loosen his grip on the country’s media. The tenuous coalition government itself nearly collapsed in August as an MDC faction considered breaking with ZANU-PF over what it saw as unfulfilled power-sharing pledges.

Media reform pledges, made as part of the historic power-sharing agreement, were also unfulfilled in many respects. ZANU-PF loyalists continued to harass, detain, and attack journalists—and so, reportedly, did the president’s wife. The year began with news that Grace Mugabe had punched freelance photographer Richard Jones during a Hong Kong vacation. “She had several diamond rings that were acting like knuckledusters,” Jones told *The Times* of London, describing an encounter as he tried to take her picture. Although Hong Kong authorities investigated, charges against the first lady were never brought.

The same month, the Zimbabwean government announced the imposition of exorbitant fees for visiting foreign journalists and local journalists working for foreign media. Foreign correspondents in Zimbabwe were told to pay an application fee of US\$10,000 and a further fee of US\$22,000 for accreditation and permits, according to news reports. Local journalists working for foreign media organizations were told to pay up to US\$4,000 in fees—an amount few Zimbabweans could afford.

A May conference organized by Minister of Information Webster Shamu was touted as promoting “an open, tolerant, and responsible media environment.” Instead, the government unwittingly demonstrated its own intolerance. The conference, intended for the nation’s journalists, was boycotted by members of the private press in part over the government’s harassment and detention of freelance photojournalist Andriison Manyere, according to the editor of the independent weekly *The Standard*, Davison Maruziva.

Then, while the conference was under way, police arrested *Zimbabwe Independent* Editor Vincent Kahiya and News Editor Constantine Chimakure on

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government fails to implement reforms allowing private media to operate.
- » Two international broadcasters allowed to resume operation.

\$32,000 KEY STATISTIC
Application and accreditation fees imposed on international journalists.

charges of “publishing falsehoods,” journalists told CPJ. The weekly had published a front-page story naming police officers and security agents involved in the December 2008 arrests of Manyere and several MDC members. A Harare magistrate released Kahiya and Chimakure on bail the next day. The journalists’ defense lawyer, Innocent Chagonda, told CPJ the article was “correct in every respect” and was based on public court records. The case was pending in late year.

Manyere told CPJ that he was kept for months in solitary confinement at Chikarubi Prison, a Harare facility known for its ill treatment of inmates. He was among a large group of people arrested in late 2008, most of them activists, including former Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation and Voice of Peace presenter Jestina Mukoko. Manyere told CPJ he had been beaten, repeatedly blindfolded, and kept in iron shackles. He recounted a harrowing experience in which he saw “a lot of moving skeletons in the prison because there was no food, no blankets, and no clothes.” Manyere, recipient of the 2009 Percy Qoboza Foreign Journalist Award given by the U.S.-based National Association of Black Journalists, said he believed he had been arrested for his coverage of human rights abuses in rural areas. Freed on bail in April, Manyere faced charges of banditry, insurgency, and terrorism in late year.

The case proved to have numerous tentacles. Manyere’s defense lawyer, Alec Muchadema, was kept overnight at Harare’s Braeside Police Station in May after the Attorney General’s office accused him of colluding with a court clerk to win Manyere’s release on bail, according to media defense lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa. An exasperated Muchadema told the London-based exile radio station SW Radio that “the pattern of lawless intimidation by authorities was systematic and widespread despite the fact that a new inclusive government ruled the country.” In July, Manyere filed a lawsuit against the government, alleging illegal detention.

Journalists continued to win occasional victories in Zimbabwean courts, which have exercised a level of independence over several years. In June, four independent journalists challenged Information Minister Shamu’s directive that all reporters covering the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa summit in Victoria Falls be accredited through the state Media and Information Commission.

The journalists—Stanley Gama, Valentine Maponga, Stanley Kwenda, and Jealous Mawarire—pointed out that the commission had been abolished in January 2008 as part of reforms to the repressive Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). High Court Justice Bharat Patel ordered the government to withdraw the accreditation requirement. Despite the ruling, security guards prohibited the four journalists from entering the summit without accreditation, according to local news reports.

The AIPPA reforms also called for creation of a new media regulator, which,

with private media representation, could act more independently. The Media and Information Commission was a notoriously repressive agency that had banned several prominent newspapers, including the *Daily News*, the *Daily News on Sunday*, the *Tribune*, and the *Weekly Times*. But the new regulatory agency had not been established by late year; neither the dormant private papers nor new private publications could obtain licenses to operate.

In July, a special government committee reviewed the case of the banned *Daily News*, once Zimbabwe’s leading private daily but shuttered in 2003, according to local news reports. The paper’s exiled editor-in-chief was still waiting for an outcome in late year. “We have not gotten the license yet, only the eligibility for a license,” said the editor, Geoff Nyarota, a former CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee. In contrast, a new state-run tabloid, *H-Metro*, was allowed to launch in September without a license, according to news reports.

The government also failed to implement reforms to the Broadcasting Service Act, which were enacted in January 2008 to allow private outlets to obtain broadcast licenses. The year ended, as it began, with a virtual state monopoly on broadcast media. The power-sharing agreement had also pledged to ensure the processing of private broadcast licenses, even encouraging exile-run stations to apply.

Conditions did improve for foreign publications after an exorbitant custom duty was lifted in August. Mugabe’s government had decreed in 2008 that foreign publications were “luxury goods” subject to a 40 percent import tax. The fees harmed papers such as *The Zimbabwean* and its sister publication, *The Zimbabwean on Sunday*, which were edited by exiled Zimbabwean journalist Wilf Mbanga and printed in South Africa. Mbanga said the paper’s circulation dropped from 200,000 to 60,000 during the time the duty was imposed.

The same month, the government allowed both the BBC and CNN to resume operations in Zimbabwe. The two stations had been banned at the height of Mugabe’s farm invasions in 2001, when the government seized white-owned agricultural property and transferred ownership to ruling party officials. In announcing the decision, Information Minister Shamu said the government and the BBC had “acknowledged the need to put behind us the mutually ruinous relationship of the past,” according to local news reports.

One independent station, Zimbabwe Community Radio, launched from an undisclosed location in March, local journalists told CPJ. The station broadcast in the country’s three main languages: Ndebele, Shona, and English.

SNAPSHOTS

ATTACKS & DEVELOPMENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

BOTSWANA

- » A media law was enacted in January requiring government accreditation for journalists and establishing an official media regulatory body, according to news reports. In May, Botswana publishers filed complaints challenging the constitutionality of the act.

BURKINA FASO

- » In February, CPJ urged President Blaise Compaoré's government to investigate a series of death threats sent to independent journalists via Yahoo France e-mail accounts. The threats, some of which dated to 2007, referred to the unsolved 1998 murder of Norbert Zongo. The most recent threats were sent to the staff of the private monthly *Le Reporter* in January after it covered a financial scandal at the National Social Security Fund. Christophe Pelletier, a spokesman for Yahoo France, told CPJ that the company had alerted police. No arrests were made.

CAMEROON

- » In June, a Yaoundé military court sentenced Jacques Blaise Mvié and Charles René Nwé, editors of the private weekly *La Nouvelle*, to five years in prison apiece in connection with stories critical of former Defense Minister Rémy Zé Meka, according to local journalists. The two were also fined 500,000 CFA francs (US\$1,000) each. The minister objected to a number of stories, including reports about his handling of a purported coup attempt. The journalists told CPJ they were not notified of the charges and, thus, were not present at their own trial. They were free in late year pending appeal.
- » Jean Bosco Talla, editor of the private weekly *Germinal* in Yaoundé, said in June that he received anonymous telephone death threats that made reference to slain editor Norbert Zongo in Burkina Faso and missing reporter Guy-André Kieffer in Ivory Coast. The threats apparently stemmed from the weekly's coverage of a human rights report that raised questions about the private wealth of President Paul Biya, according to local journalists.
- » The Communications Ministry ordered police to seal off the Yaoundé stu-

dios of Sky One Radio in August for unspecified violations of national media laws, according to news reports. The government imposed a six-month suspension on the station's operations. The suspension appeared to be linked to the station's daily call-in program, "The Tribunal," during which listeners aired grievances concerning public services, according to local journalists.

- » A magistrate in Yaoundé sentenced Michel Mombio, editor of the biweekly *L'Ouest Républicain*, to 14 months in prison in connection with a column that was harshly critical of Scientific Research Minister Madeleine Tchuinté. The editor was also ordered to pay a fine of 1 million CFA francs (US\$2,300) and damages of 5 million CFA francs (US\$11,500), according to local journalists. Mombio, who had been jailed since September 2008, was released in November after having served the designated 14 months.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

- » In June, a judge ordered the arrest of Rodrigo Angüe Nguema, a local correspondent for Agence France-Presse and Radio France Internationale, after he failed to post 20 million CFA francs (US\$43,000) bail on libel charges, defense lawyer Fabián Nsue Nguema told CPJ. The charges related to an erroneous April story, which Nguema retracted, alleging embezzlement at the national airline. Nguema was acquitted of criminal charges in October and released from Black Beach Prison in the capital, Malabo. RFI and AFP were ordered to pay 40 million CFA francs (US\$85,000) in civil damages to an airline executive, according to the press freedom group *Journaliste en Danger*.

GABON

- » Coverage of President Omar Bongo's declining health and the related succession issues drew government reprisals. In May, the National Communication Council banned the monthly *Ezombolo* for six months and the satirical weekly *Le Nganga* for one month over articles speculating about infighting among Bongo's advisers, according to local journalists. Days later, authorities barred reporters for the broadcaster France 24 from entering the country, claiming they had insufficient accreditation, one of the journalists, Arnaud Zajtman, told CPJ by e-mail. The episode occurred after the council accused France 24 and other French broadcasters of airing "unofficial and alarmist information regarding the president's health," according to Agence France-Presse. Bongo, the

longest-serving African head of state, died the next month at the age of 73.

- » Military intelligence officers detained Albert Yangari, editor of the state daily *L'Union* for several hours on September 25. Officers questioned him about *L'Union* stories that contradicted the government's account of deadly post-election riots in the city of Port-Gentil, according to news reports and local journalists. *L'Union* reported a higher number of fatalities than the government, and its stories raised questions as to whether troops used live ammunition in quelling the unrest. *L'Union* reporter Jonas Moulenda briefly went into hiding after reporting death threats, according to the same sources.
- » In November, the National Communication Council suspended six newspapers for "violating the ethics of journalism" and "inciting ethnic divisions" in their coverage of the presidential election that brought Ali Bongo to office to succeed his late father. The council suspended *Nku'u Le Messenger* and *Le Crocodile* for one month; *Le Scribouillard*, *L'Ombre*, and *La Nation* for two months; and *Echos du Nord* for three months.

GUINEA

- » Security forces assaulted at least a dozen journalists trying to cover a September 28 opposition rally against junta leader Capt. Moussa Dadis Camara at a stadium in the capital, Conakry, local journalists told CPJ. Several reported their equipment had been seized or damaged. Security forces ultimately stormed the arena, killing dozens of people, according to local news reports. Six journalists for French broadcasters France 2 and France 24, who traveled to Guinea in October to cover the aftermath, were turned back because they lacked "a formal invitation," according to Agence France-Presse. The United Nations dispatched a commission in late year to investigate the actions of the security forces.

IVORY COAST

- » Nanankoua Gnamantêh, op-ed editor of the pro-opposition private weekly *Le Repère*, was arrested in March after being questioned about an article critical of President Laurent Gbagbo, according to local journalists. The jailing appeared to violate the 2004 press law, which decriminalized press offenses and banned pretrial detention of journalists. After two weeks in pretrial detention, Gnamantêh and Managing Editor Eddy Péhé were convicted of "offending the head of state" and fined 20 million CFA francs (US\$45,000) each. *Le Repère* was also suspended for eight editions.

- » On May 7, an appeals court in Abidjan granted bail to French freelance photojournalist Jean Paul Ney, who had been imprisoned on antistate charges since December 2007, according to defense lawyer Minta Traoré. In a March interview from prison with the French weekly *L'Express*, Ney said he was arrested while making a documentary about exiled coup leader Ibrahim Coulibaly. Once free on bail, Ney left the country.
- » A magistrate in Abidjan suspended the weekly newspaper *Notre Défi* for two months beginning in October after finding Editor Baté Mabo guilty of publishing "false news" in a story accusing the state prosecutor's office of corruption, according to local journalists and news reports. Mabo, known by his pen name Jean Bedel, was also fined 5 million CFA francs (US\$11,500).
- » On October 21, dozens of members of the National Union of University Students of Ivory Coast stormed the offices of the private media group Le Réveil, according to local journalists. The assailants objected to a story in one of Le Réveil's publications that was critical of a former union leader. The assailants—some armed with clubs—threatened newsroom staff, damaged equipment, and roughed up employees, local journalists said.

KENYA

- » Francis Nyaruri, a reporter for the private *Weekly Citizen*, was murdered in January in western Nyanza province. Nyaruri's mutilated body was found in Koderia Forest two weeks after he went missing, according to local journalists. Two suspects were arrested in May but later released, the *Weekly Citizen* reported. The paper said Nyaruri had written a number of stories accusing high-ranking police officers of corruption. He had received several threats in response, local journalists told CPJ. The case's lead investigator, Chief Inspector Robert Natwoli, and Nyaruri's family lawyer, Andrew Mandi, both went into hiding in June after receiving threats, local journalists told CPJ.

MALAWI

- » In May, police shuttered the opposition-run Joy Radio and arrested two reporters and a technician on charges of violating election law by airing campaign messages within 48 hours of voting, according to local journalists. Presenters Mary Chande and Obrien Nazombe were held for four days by police while technician Adbulrazaaq Telela was released after a few hours, local journalists said. The station remained off the air for three

weeks, which included the four-day voting period in May, the station's lawyer, Jonathan Kara, told CPJ. The charge stemmed from the rebroadcast of a 2008 political program questioning government claims about the country's food supply. In June, a magistrate in Blantyre ordered police to allow the station to re-open, according to local reports. A magistrate acquitted the journalists of all charges in September.

MOZAMBIQUE

- » Ildefonso Muanantatha, governor of Tete province, issued public threats in March against Bernardo Carlos, a reporter for the private daily *Noticias*, according to news accounts. The threats, which included references to the 2000 murder of journalist Carlos Cardoso, were apparently linked to stories critical of the provincial government, news reports said. No charges were filed in connection with the threats.
- » South African police arrested convicted killer Anibal dos Santos Jr. in Johannesburg in August. The fugitive, convicted in the 2000 murder of investigative reporter Carlos Cardoso, had escaped from a Mozambican prison in December 2008. Dos Santos, better known as Anibalzinho, was returned to Mozambique to complete his 30-year sentence. He had escaped from prison and been recaptured twice before.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

- » Bruno Jacquet Ossébi, a Franco-Congolese online journalist, died in a Brazzaville military hospital in February, 12 days after being severely burned in a mysterious fire that killed his girlfriend and her 8- and 10-year-old children in their home, according to news reports and CPJ research. Ossébi was known for his critical coverage of alleged government malfeasance and for publicizing an international lawsuit questioning the private wealth of the ruling families of Congo and other African nations. Two successive magistrates were appointed to investigate the cause of the fire, but no report or findings had been released by late year.
- » In February, the state-run High Council on Freedom of Communication ordered the private TV station Canal Bénédiction Plus off the air shortly after it ran footage of a 1991 national political convention that marked a transition from one-party rule to a multiparty democracy, according to local journalists. Council President Jacques Banaganzala accused the station of airing violent

and abusive statements. The suspension was lifted in July, according to the press freedom group *Journaliste en Danger*.

RWANDA

- » The government suspended the BBC's Kinyarwanda-language service in April, citing what it called bias in a program that was to be aired on the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the BBC reported. The weekly program "Imvo n'imvano" (Analysis of the Source of the Problem) was to have featured a debate on forgiveness concerning the genocide, according to the Rwandan News Agency. Program Director Ally Mugenzi said the government objected to the comments of a former presidential candidate, Faustin Twagiramungu. The ban was lifted two months later on the condition that the station comply with government-set content guidelines, the Information Ministry said.
- » President Paul Kagame signed a new media law in August. An earlier version passed by parliament had been rejected by Kagame, who heeded media concerns that it contained education requirements for journalists, according to the Association of Rwandan Journalists. The final version, although seen as an improvement, contained repressive clauses, CPJ research showed. The law included vague language that allows authorities to prosecute journalists criminally for publishing material considered in "contempt to the head of state" or that "endangers public decency." Journalists may still be prosecuted under the existing penal code, which continues to include provisions on defamation and privacy infringement that can lead to prison sentences.

SENEGAL

- » In April, President Abdoulaye Wade pardoned imprisoned editor El Malick Seck of the daily *24 Heures Chrono*. Seck was serving a three-year prison sentence over an editorial alleging the involvement of Wade and his son, Karim, in a money-laundering scandal, according to defense lawyer Demba Ciré Bathily. Seck served eight months of his sentence. Wade also pardoned 12 other individuals, including a driver and two bodyguards for former Transport Minister Farba Senghor, who were convicted of vandalizing the offices of *24 Heures Chrono* and the newspaper *LAs* in August 2008, according to news reports.
- » In June, a criminal court judge sentenced editor Papa Samba Diarra and reporter Mame Sèye Diop of the newsweekly *Weekend* to three months in

prison and fines of 10 million CFA francs each (US \$21,657) on libel charges stemming from a story critical of a member of parliament, according to the Media Foundation of West Africa. The journalists appealed.

- » In September, a tribunal judge in Kaolack jailed reporters Papa Samba Sène of the private daily *L'As* and Abdou Dia of Radio Futurs Médias on charges of defamation and publishing false news based on a complaint by the local governor, according to local news reports. The governor objected to stories alleging malfeasance in an agricultural program. Sène and Dia were released on bail after 12 days in prison; the case was pending in late year.
- » Followers of Serigne Modou Kara Mbacké, a leader of Senegal's influential Mourides Muslim Brotherhood, ransacked the offices of the independent daily *Walfadjri* on September 25, according to news reports. The assailants, some armed with iron bars, were apparently angered by a story critical of Mbacké. At least three staffers were reported injured. Government spokesman Moustapha Maba Guirassi condemned the attack, and Mbacké later publicly apologized. No arrests were reported.

SIERRA LEONE

- » Four female radio journalists were abducted in the eastern town of Keneima in February by a women's group that supports female circumcision, according to local news reports. The group accused the reporters of broadcasting messages to end the practice of female circumcision. The journalists were stripped naked and forced to walk through the streets of Keneima, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists told CPJ. No action was taken against the abductors.

TANZANIA

- » A court in Dar es Salaam ordered the independent weekly *MwanaHalisi* to pay damages of 3 billion Tanzanian shillings (US\$2.25 million) in April in a civil defamation lawsuit filed by a member of parliament, according to news reports. Rostam Aziz objected to a *MwanaHalisi* report linking him to a U.S. company accused of corrupt dealings with the government, according to local journalists. Justice Robert Makramba also ordered *MwanaHalisi* to issue a front-page public apology, halt reporting on the plaintiff, and cover all court costs, according to court documents. The weekly appealed.



AMERICAS

AMERICAS

ANALYSIS 61

Journalists are among the targets of unlawful government espionage in Colombia, Argentina, and other countries. Press freedom suffers as fearful sources grow reluctant to talk.

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PHOTOS
Section break: Reuters/Pablo La Rosa—Uruguayan reporters interview defeated presidential candidate Luis Alberto Lacalle. Analysis: AP/Fernando Vergara—Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez appears at a press conference with military leaders to announce the end of unlawful wiretapping.

IN THE AMERICAS, BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING REPORTERS

BY CARLOS LAURÍA

THE TOPIC BEING INVESTIGATED BY TWO COLOMBIAN REPORTERS was explosive enough that it required unusual security. Fearful that the subjects would learn prematurely of the story, the reporters took separate notes, which they did not share and which they later destroyed. They didn't communicate by telephone or e-mail, and they met only in public locations. They relayed only the barest information to their own sources.

It was not enough. Before Canal Uno television and the newsmagazine *Semana* were ready in April to break their joint story, which would address influence-peddling allegations against the two sons of Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, the administration knew all about it. A government spokesman told Canal Uno that it was well aware of the inquiry.

Daniel Coronell, the Canal Uno news director and *Semana* columnist who led the investigation with reporter Ignacio Gómez, is convinced that his team had been victimized by illegal government espionage. It's possible, he concedes, that word could have leaked to the administration through other avenues.

But in some very important ways, it does not matter.

When news erupted in February that national intelligence agents had subjected journalists, politicians, judges, and human rights defenders to illegal phone tapping, e-mail interception, and surveillance for much of the decade, it created



a well-founded perception that the Colombian government was closely and constantly watching the press and other critics.

The unlawful spying carried out by the national intelligence agency—which operates under Uribe’s authority—was one of two such scandals to play out in the region in 2009, both of which targeted journalists, among others, and caused a significant chilling effect on press freedom. In Argentina, a federal investigation was examining whether national intelligence agents tapped the phones and hacked the e-mail of critical journalists, politicians, judges, and artists as part of a campaign intended to discredit and deter their work.

As a result, journalists in both countries told CPJ, sources are becoming more reluctant to talk to the press. Coronell calls the espionage “the most serious threat against freedom of the press in Colombia” today because it endangers confidential

ESPIONAGE TARGETING JOURNALISTS AND OTHER CRITICS CHILLS PRESS FREEDOM IN THE REGION.

sources. Journalists reporting on official corruption are looking over their shoulders and taking extraordinary steps to ensure their private conversations are not intercepted or their e-mails hacked. Their work has been harmed, and their already tense relations with government officials have become more contentious.

Spying has an unfortunate history in the region. One of the most extreme examples occurred in Peru in the early 1990s, when the intelligence service under President Alberto Fujimori engaged in assassination plots, death threats, wiretapping, surveillance, and smear tactics to intimidate the press.

In recent years, government espionage against journalists has been reported in Latin American countries such as Venezuela and Bolivia. In Cuba, spying is standard procedure: Cuban state security agents have kept journalists and dissidents under constant surveillance for decades, intercepting and recording their phone conversations. In Mexico, opposition Sen. Manilo Beltrones has made allegations of political espionage, fueling perceptions in the press corps that it, too, has been targeted. The United States is not immune to such practices. In 2008, the FBI issued an apology after agents violated procedures in obtaining the telephone records of several journalists covering Islamic terrorism in Southeast Asia. The FBI would not disclose the nature of the underlying investigation that led to the 2004 record collection.

In Colombia, it was *Semana* that exposed the extensive spy scheme devised by top officials in the Administrative Department of Security, the intelligence service also known as DAS. Coronell led the list of reporters being monitored by the

DAS, but the roll call read like a who’s who of Colombian journalism: *Semana* Director Alejandro Santos; Julio Sánchez Cristo, director of national W Radio; Darío Arizmendi, director of national Caracol Radio; Ramiro Bejarano, a columnist for the daily *El Espectador*; Hollman Morris, journalist and producer of the weekly news show “Contravía” on Canal Uno; and Félix de Bedout of W Radio.

The Attorney General’s office launched an inquiry that resulted in the arrests of several top intelligence officials, including former DAS Deputy Director José Miguel Narváez, in August and September. Four other DAS directors were under investigation in late year. Uribe denied involvement, put the blame on rogue DAS officials who acted as a “mafia,” and said his government would implement reforms.

Wiretaps, illegal in Colombia without judicial order, had started in early 2003 and stretched into mid-2009—beyond even the first news reports of the scandal. During that period, DAS officials monitored and recorded thousands of e-mails and telephone conversations, and followed opponents, judges, and journalists. International human rights groups and diplomats were also spied upon, according to news reports. *Semana*, for example, obtained a recording of an intercepted phone call between a U.S. diplomat and a Colombian Supreme Court judge investigating links between Uribe’s supporters and right-wing paramilitary groups.

The Miami-based daily *El Nuevo Herald* reported in June that telephone conversations and e-mails between CPJ staffers and Colombian

A LIST OF REPORTERS UNDER SURVEILLANCE READS LIKE A WHO’S WHO OF COLOMBIAN JOURNALISM.

journalists had been intercepted. In a statement, CPJ demanded the government bring an immediate end to the spying and noted the grave damage it was causing to free expression.

Reporter Morris, known for his in-depth coverage of Colombia’s five-decade civil conflict, said he believed that spies had targeted his confidential sources to neutralize them and to discredit his reporting. A harsh government critic, he has been derided by Uribe and other high-ranking officials as an ally of the leftist guerrillas—accusations that Morris said acted as “a green light for the DAS” to monitor his conversations and correspondence. The target of death threats in 2005, Morris has actually been under DAS protection. “It’s ironic: The same people tasked with protecting me are the ones who are supposedly spying,” he said. “It is like sleeping with the enemy.”

Morris has sued the government over the surveillance. He said documents unearthed as part of his lawsuit show that e-mails sent to him by CPJ and the Organization of American States’ special rapporteur for freedom of expression, among others, had been intercepted by the DAS.

Surveillance of journalists did not start with the Uribe administration. In 1996, during the administration of President Ernesto Samper, reports alleged that the intelligence service was spying on reporters. But that espionage was sporadic, Coronell said, compared to the systematic and persistent spying that occurred this decade. The Uribe government, according to Coronell, has deliberately sought to conflate critics with enemies. "This is clearly an abuse of power," he said.

In Argentina, a federal investigation that continued in late year was examining whether high-ranking officials had either ordered or tacitly approved telephone and e-mail surveillance of political opponents and journalists, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Judge Sandra Arroyo Salgado's investigation began after hackers broke into the e-mail accounts of several reporters and media executives, read the journalists' private exchanges with sources, and distributed the stolen messages to other parties. The activities allegedly took place in 2006, during the administration of Néstor Kirchner, husband of the current president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

Among the victims was Daniel Santoro, a senior investigative reporter with the country's largest daily, *Clarín*, whose off-the-record interview with a judge on a major drug trafficking case was stolen and relayed to a lawyer for one of the defendants. Luis Majul, host of the weekly show "La Cornisa" on América TV, said that a hacker sent a bogus e-mail from his Yahoo account to his contacts calling for a boycott of *Clarín*. The message revealed the e-mail user names and passwords of more than 20 Argentine reporters and media executives. Government officials have denied that the intelligence service, known as the Secretaría de Inteligencia, or SI, was involved. No arrests had been made by late year.

"Revolted techniques from the intelligence service have never been used in such a systematic and efficient way to intimidate and discredit opposition politicians or independent journalists," columnist Alfredo Leuco wrote in October in *Perfil*, a weekend paper critical of the administration. "There have never been so many complaints about serious violations of our colleagues' privacy," said Leuco, who believes the government is trying to undermine independent reporting.

Political opponents such as former President Eduardo Duhalde and one-time allies such as former Chief of Cabinet Alberto Fernández have asserted publicly that they had been the targets of espionage. Mariano Obarrio, a political correspondent with the Buenos Aires-based daily *La Nación* who has reported extensively on the topic, said that an intelligence team began conducting

surveillance of political opponents, business people, journalists, and even some administration officials in 2003. The team, Obarrio reported, worked under direct orders from top SI officials, wiretapping telephone lines and intercepting e-mails without court orders, which would constitute a violation of the country's 2001 intelligence law. The spy agency's operations are under direct supervision of the president.

Obarrio found himself a target in 2006. Unidentified assailants broke into his house, threatened his family, and told him he was being followed. After his newspaper hired a lawyer and investigator to look into the attack, Obarrio discovered his phone line was tapped. The nerve-racking events took place shortly after Obarrio sent the SI's deputy director a series of questions concerning espionage

**FUJIMORI SET A NOTORIOUS
PRECEDENT, EMPLOYING A WELL-
OILED AND MASSIVE SPY NETWORK.**

activities. Obarrio filed a judicial complaint about the harassment and surveillance, but the investigation produced no results. Although the journalist continued to cover government policies critically, he eventually dropped his work on espionage. "I understood it as a message intended to disrupt my work. I felt the pressure, and decided it was better for me and my family to forget about it," he said.

Venezuelan authorities make little effort to conceal espionage against reporters. Conversations involving political opponents of President Hugo Chávez Frías and critics in the media are often monitored and recorded by the secret service, according to CPJ research and press reports. State-owned media have reproduced segments of those conversations to damage the reputations of government critics. Alberto Federico Ravell, general director of Globovisión, a television station known for its strong opposition views, found his October 2008 phone conversation with Teodoro Petkoff, editor of the weekly *Tal Cual*, aired on the pro-government station Venezolana de Televisión. Ravell filed a complaint, but it generated no results.

In Bolivia, the Senate examined a case in which Juan José Espada, a reporter with the critical television station Unitel, was apparently under surveillance by intelligence agents in the national police. Police commander Gen. Miguel Vásquez said the surveillance had happened without his knowledge. A Senate committee formed to study the case recommended that it be investigated further by the Attorney General's office, Espada said, but no prosecutor was assigned.

Peru's Fujimori set a notorious precedent in Latin America. By employing a well-oiled and massive spy network, Fujimori consolidated his hold on power

**AN ARGENTINE REPORTER WHO
EXAMINED SPYING ALLEGATIONS
FOUND HIMSELF UNDER WATCH.**

after taking office in 1990. During his tenure, independent journalists were under intense scrutiny: Their phones were tapped, and their movements watched. Reporters were detained and questioned on trumped-up terrorism and tax charges; some were kidnapped and threatened by members of Peru's shadowy National Intelligence Service. The Fujimori government fed information gathered in its espionage to tabloids sympathetic to the administration (and loaded with state advertising). They, in turn, launched smear campaigns against leading critics in the media, some of whom were forced into exile by the negative attention.

In April 2009, Fujimori was sentenced to 25 years in jail after being convicted of crimes against humanity for directing military death squads. He was sentenced again, in September, to six years in prison for secretly wiretapping politicians, journalists, and businessmen during his decade in power, along with bribing congressmen and buying off a television station and a newspaper editorial board to back his 2000 re-election campaign.

"Espionage during the Fujimori era has been well-studied: It was systemic, extremely organized, and centralized," said Ricardo Uceda, executive director of the regional press group Instituto Prensa y Sociedad, and a top Peruvian investigative reporter. "Fujimori needed such a system to exercise power. He was well aware of journalists' affairs and their flaws, and knew perfectly how to neutralize the media."

Although espionage campaigns in Peru in the 1990s and Colombia in this decade were both pervasive and intrusive, there was a significant power imbalance during the Fujimori regime that made the spying more pernicious, Uceda pointed

**WHO IS IN CHARGE IN
COLOMBIA? INVESTIGATORS
EXAMINING ESPIONAGE ARE
THEMSELVES THREATENED.**

out. The Fujimori government, Uceda said, had such tight control over the judiciary that it could ensure government espionage would go unchecked. That's different from contemporary Colombia, where the scandal has prompted

an in-depth probe and arrests.

Still, major reforms are far from certain in either Colombia or Argentina. Argentine officials appear to be brushing off legitimate threats to the country's democracy. The 2001 intelligence law sets prison penalties of up to four years for illegal espionage, but the congressional committee tasked with overseeing intelligence activities has yet to take substantive steps to enforce the law and control illegal spying.

In Colombia, where the scandal hit just as Uribe was flirting with a bid for a third term, some possible reform is in its early stages. In October, Congress began considering a bill aimed at creating a smaller intelligence agency with more limited functions, news reports said. External pressure may do some good. The

Inter-American Commission, the autonomous human rights body of the Organization of American States, expressed concern about the scandal and urged the Colombian government to conduct a thorough review to prevent violations of international human rights standards.

Vice President Francisco Santos Calderón has publicly acknowledged that the situation is serious, and said the institutions of democracy are acting. DAS Director Felipe Muñoz said the agency will cut its workforce and focus on counterintelligence and border control, according to press reports. But who is really in charge? A November report by *Semana* said that investigators examining the illegal espionage have themselves been threatened and followed in an attempt to disrupt the probe.

The solution rests in the message sent from the top of the civilian government. Journalists and free press advocates say that real reform can be achieved only through strong political will exercised by leaders at the highest levels of government. They must send a strong message that the intelligence service cannot be used against members of the judiciary, the political opposition, and the independent press as a means to preserve power.

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ARGENTINA

PRESS FREEDOM ADVOCATES WON TWO IMPORTANT VICTORIES AS CONGRESS decriminalized defamation, and a federal court issued a ruling that, while still under appeal, could lead to the dismantling of the government's manipulative distribution of official advertising. But those advances were obscured by a contentious debate over broadcast regulatory legislation backed by the government of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. The measure, signed into law in October and immediately challenged in court, apportioned broadcast frequencies among private, government, and nonprofit outlets, while creating a new regulatory body.

The administration said the legislation would curb monopolies, making radio and television more democratic, but media owners and opposition politicians saw it as a means for the government to exert greater control over news content and force large media companies to divest some holdings. The debate worsened overall relations between the administration and the media, and fueled confrontations between the administration and the country's largest media owner, the Clarín Group.

Individual journalists were split on the legislation, which was based on an initiative drafted by a coalition of civil society groups called the Alliance for Democratic Broadcasting. The law replaced an anachronistic measure, enacted during military rule in 1980, that gave the executive branch sole regulatory power over broadcasting. Kirchner unveiled the new legislation in late August, saying that it would "allow everybody to speak their minds." By early October, after heated debate and more than 100 legislative revisions, the sweeping measure had become law.

The legislation reserves a third of the television and radio spectrum for nonprofit organizations; the other two-thirds are to be divided between private companies and state broadcasters. It also limits the number of licenses a company can hold, and sets quotas for locally produced music, films, and programs. Companies that own both broadcast networks and cable channels must divest one of the two types of holdings. Divestiture and other aspects of the law were immediately challenged in federal courts. In December, a judge in Mendoza ordered implementation of the law be suspended while the challenges were pending. The

Country summaries in this chapter were reported and written by Senior Program Coordinator **Carlos Lauría**, Senior Research Associate **María Salazar-Ferro**, Washington representative **Frank Smyth**, and program consultants **Mike O'Connor** and **Claudia Duarte**. The **McCormick Foundation** provided substantial support toward CPJ's work in the Americas.

government said it would appeal.

Most Argentine journalists said the military-era broadcasting rules needed an overhaul, but some worried the new law would limit free expression. The composition of the new regulatory body was at the center of the argument. The law requires the new regulator be composed of seven members—two appointed by the president, three by Congress, and two by a federal council made up mostly of governors with some civil society representatives. "The regulator will rely heavily on political appointees, and the executive will have a lot of power in nominating its members and controlling its functions," warned Adrián Ventura, a columnist for the daily *La Nación* and a tough government critic. Detractors also pointed to vague definitions in the text that they said could allow the new regulator to revoke broadcast licenses.

Supporters countered that if the government wanted to exert control over the media, it already had an effective tool in the 1980 law. Backers included Frank La Rue, a U.N. special rapporteur on freedom of expression, who called the new law "an example to other countries." Horacio Verbitsky, famed columnist for the daily *Página 12* and president of the human rights organization Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, said the law represented "a significant

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » New broadcast law sparks contentious debate, raises concerns.
- » In major victory, criminal defamation laws are repealed.

200

KEY STATISTIC
Tax agents who raided *Clarín* in apparent reprisal for the newspaper's coverage.

step forward toward the enrichment of a democratic debate through a more pluralistic access to information." CPJ found that while the legislation is an important improvement over the 1980 law, its provisions could be misused for political purposes. In particular, CPJ said it would monitor whether the regulatory agency is subjected to undue political influence.

Despite government denials, many analysts said the legislation was also aimed at weakening the Clarín Group, owner of newspapers, radio stations, and both broadcast and cable television outlets. Clarín, an Internet service provider as well, has produced critical coverage of the Kirchner administration. The legislative debate escalated existing animosity between the administration and Clarín. The administration and its allies lashed out at Clarín for what they perceived to be biased coverage, most notably in June elections in which Kirchner's Peronist party lost its congressional majority.

Amid the deteriorating climate, Clarín was subjected to a direct government attack. On September 11, about 200 tax agents raided the offices of the group's newspaper, *Clarín*, after the paper ran a cover story alleging the government improperly granted a farm subsidy. Clarín and others decried the raid as government intimidation. The tax agency immediately backpedaled, saying the raid was conducted in error and claiming to fire two officials for carrying out the action.

The administration also claimed to be investigating who ordered the raid and why, but it disclosed no findings by late year. *La Nación*, citing tax agency documents, reported in December that Ricardo Echegaray, the agency's director, had ordered the raid and that the two officials were never actually dismissed. No government tax probe was ever carried out against *Clarín*.

Clarín was targeted in another episode with political overtones. The Teamsters, headed by close administration ally Hugo Moyano, briefly blocked the distribution of *Clarín*, *La Nación*, *Perfil*, and other newspapers in November, demanding that the papers' drivers be represented by the union. The newspapers and the publishers group Asociación de Entidades Periodísticas Argentinas complained that the union's move was politically motivated.

In November, in a major advance for press freedom, Congress decriminalized libel and slander. The measure followed recommendations made by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in a May 2008 ruling. The court, an arm of the Organization of American States, voided the 1999 criminal defamation conviction of journalist and author Eduardo Kimel. The case stemmed from Kimel's book, *La Masacre de San Patricio* (The San Patricio Massacre), in which he criticized an investigation into the 1976 slaying of five priests during the military dictatorship. The court also urged Argentine leaders to reform defamation laws in line with regional standards.

Journalists and free press advocates also hailed a January ruling by a federal appeals court that found the government was improperly withholding state advertising from publications owned by the media group Editorial Perfil in retaliation for its critical coverage of the Kirchner administration. The government appealed the decision, and the case was pending in late year.

CPJ and other analysts have found that Kirchner, following a system institutionalized during her husband's presidency, has manipulated the distribution of state advertising by withholding ads to critical media and rewarding friendly outlets with government spots. Free press advocates have contended that manipulative government advertising violates Articles 14 and 32 of the Argentine Constitution, which bar censorship and guarantee press freedom, respectively; and Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

BRAZIL

IN A MAJOR ADVANCE FOR PRESS FREEDOM, BRAZIL'S HIGHEST COURT struck down a repressive 1967 law that criminalized broad swaths of sensitive reporting and set harsh potential penalties. But defamation laws remained a concern as penal code provisions allowed prison penalties for libel and slander. And a flood of civil defamation cases continued unabated, in some cases leading lower courts to issue censorship orders that barred news media from covering public issues, including alleged corruption involving government officials and business people.

In April, the Supreme Federal Tribunal ruled that the 1967 Press Law, an anachronistic remnant of the country's military rule, violated constitutional guarantees of free expression. The court had earlier suspended 22 of the law's 77 articles pending its final ruling. CPJ and others had campaigned against the law, arguing that it was inconsistent with regional standards for free expression. The press law defined violations in sweeping terms that included reporting deemed offensive to public morals; reporting a plaintiff found damaging to his reputation or offensive to his dignity; reporting the government deemed subversive; and reporting of "true" facts that might be considered distorted or provocative. It also allowed authorities to censor media outlets and writers, seize publications, and impose prison terms of up to three years for violations.

The high court's decision bolstered a growing body of international legal opinion that civil remedies provide adequate redress for press offenses. In a landmark 2004 decision, the Inter-American

Court of Human Rights, the legal arm of the Organization of American States, said that critics of public officials must have "leeway in order for ample debate to take place on matters of public interest." Laws that criminalize speech are incompatible with the rights established under Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights, which Brazil has ratified. As the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights stated in 1994: "Considering the consequences of criminal sanctions and the inevitable chilling effect they have on freedom of expression,

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Judges in defamation cases issue sweeping censorship orders.
- » Ex-police officers convicted in abduction, torture of *O Dia* journalists.

KEY STATISTIC

44 Defamation lawsuits filed by a single congressman. Complaints target dozens of journalists for critical coverage.

criminalization of speech can only apply in those exceptional circumstances when there is an obvious and direct threat of lawless violence.”

Under provisions that remain in the country’s penal code, however, Brazilian journalists could still be jailed for up to two years for criminal defamation. The law has been used to harass and intimidate critical journalists, CPJ research found.

Civil defamation provisions have also been used to silence journalists. Thousands of the lawsuits fill trial court dockets, filed by businessmen, politicians, and public officials who allege that critical journalists and outlets have offended their honor, CPJ research shows. Plaintiffs often file multiple suits on a single matter and seek disproportionately high damages as a way of straining the financial resources of their critics. The practice has become so common it is known as the “industry of compensation.”

More alarming, though, are censorship orders issued by trial courts that bar media defendants from covering important public issues while the lawsuits are pending. In one notable case, on July 31, Judge Dácio Vieira of the Federal District Court in Brasília barred the daily *O Estado de São Paulo* and its Web site *Estadão* from publishing reports on a corruption scandal involving the family of former Brazilian President José Sarney, according to local news reports. The case stemmed from a report on the allocation of federal contracts to relatives and close friends of Sarney, who was chairman of the Senate in 2009. *O Estado de São Paulo* was the first outlet to report on Sarney’s alleged involvement in the scandal. Vieira ruled that *O Estado de São Paulo* would be fined 150,000 reals (US\$87,000) for every story published on the case. The judge said the ban would apply to other news outlets seeking to republish the daily’s stories. The paper lost an appeal, but the Sarney family dropped the case in December.

On July 6, prominent journalist Lúcio Flávio Pinto, editor of the Belém-based newspaper *Jornal Povo* in the northern state of Pará, was found liable in a civil defamation suit and ordered to pay US\$15,000 in damages—the equivalent of the paper’s revenue for a year and a half. The suit was brought by brothers Ronaldo and Romulo Maiorana Jr., owners of the Organizações Rômulo Maiorana media group, the biggest communication company in northern Brazil. The Maiorana brothers argued Pinto had damaged the family’s reputation with a 2005 story on the media group’s economic power and influence. Members of the Maiorana family filed four other civil defamation suits against Pinto, a 2005 CPJ International Press Freedom Award winner.

The powerful and privileged filed other cases. Congressman Edmar Moreira filed more than 44 suits against at least 38 journalists and 13 news outlets for reports on his fortune and his alleged involvement in official corruption. A court in southeastern Espírito Santo state ordered the news Web site *Século Diário* to

take down three stories on the alleged involvement of two state judges in a scheme to harass local lawyers. In São Paulo state, Adamantina Mayor José Francisco Figueiredo Micheloni filed a suit against the local daily *Jornal da Cidade* based on a quote from a councilwoman that had offended him. A local businessman in northeastern Fortaleza obtained an injunction barring O Povo media group—which includes a newspaper, radio stations, a TV station, and online services—from reporting on his finances. The plaintiff alleged the news organization had violated his privacy, although O Povo said the same financial information was publicly available online.

Brazil ranked 13th on CPJ’s Impunity Index, a list of countries in which journalists are killed regularly and governments fail to solve the crimes. While the ranking reflected Brazil’s longstanding record of violence against the press, authorities have made recent progress in bringing perpetrators to justice.

In May, one man was convicted and sentenced to 23 years in prison for participating in the murder of Nicanor Linhares, the provocative host of a top-rated radio show in the state of Ceará. Linhares was killed in June 2003 by two armed men who stormed into his broadcast booth at Rádio Vale do Jaguaribe in the city of Limoeiro do Norte. Charges were still pending in late year against the alleged masterminds of the crime, a local politician and her spouse, a federal judge.

In August, former police officers Odin Fernandes da Silva and Davi Liberato de Araújo were convicted and sentenced to 31 years in prison for being part of the militia that kidnapped and tortured two journalists and a driver working undercover for the Rio de Janeiro-based daily *O Dia* in the Rio slum Baran in 2008. The kidnappers beat the journalists and the driver repeatedly, gave them electric shocks, put plastic bags over their heads, and threatened to kill them, they said. The team was released seven hours later.

Despite the convictions, media workers continued to be targets of violence and obstruction, especially in the country’s interior. On June 27, in northern Amazonas, Transportation Minister Alfredo Nascimento and his son allegedly assaulted Ronaldo Lázaro Tiradentes, a reporter for Tiradentes Radio and Television, in the Manaus Airport parking lot, local news reports said. The journalist, who filmed parts of the episode with his cell phone, filed a complaint with the federal police.

On July 16, military police tried to prevent journalists from covering a protest outside the home of Rio Grande do Sul Gov. Yeda Crusius in the state capital, Porto Alegre. The governor was under investigation in connection with the alleged misappropriation of more than US\$24 million. Police detained freelance photographer Antônio Carlos Argemi when he tried to step out of a restricted area to take pictures. Argemi was released without charge.

In August, Carlos Baía, director of the Barcarena-based Metropolitana Radio

Station in Pará, received telephone death threats after denouncing alleged fraud in Barcarena City Hall, news accounts said. After filing a police report, Baía resigned and fled the city. Later that month, four unidentified men attacked the offices of Marília-based radio Diário FM in São Paulo state, according to local news reports. The assailants bound the security guard with rope and destroyed the central transmission equipment. The station was off the air for three hours after the attack.

COLOMBIA

THE STRAINED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE Bogotá-based independent press worsened after news media revealed that the national intelligence agency had been spying on leading critics, including journalists. The press continued to be caught in the middle of the ongoing civil conflict as officials made loaded accusations and far-right paramilitary and leftist guerrilla groups terrorized provincial reporters. In an important step in the fight against impunity, a court convicted the masterminds in a 2003 journalist killing. While CPJ research has shown a gradual decline in journalist murders over the last five years, one reporter was slain in reprisal for his work in 2009.

The leading Colombian newsweekly *Semana*—known for investigations that have shaken the administration of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez—published a story in February on a spying scheme orchestrated by agents of the Administrative Department of Security (DAS), the national intelligence service. The magazine reported that officials spied on critical journalists, members of the opposition, Supreme Court justices, government officials, and international human rights groups. Thousands of e-mails and telephone conversations were intercepted, and the infor-

mation was alleged to have been passed on to criminal groups, *Semana* reported. The country's most prominent journalists were among those monitored.

Uribe denied involvement, blaming rogue elements in the intelligence service for the spying. The Attorney General's office ordered an immediate search of DAS headquarters and

an investigation into the charges. Investigators later determined that the scheme stretched from 2003 well into 2009, according to news reports. The Miami-based daily *El Nuevo Herald* reported in June that, among other things, the DAS monitored e-mails and telephone conversations between Colombian journalists and international human rights groups, including CPJ.

In September, after the arrest of 10 high-ranking DAS officials, the Uribe administration introduced a bill before Congress to create a smaller intelligence organization with more limited functions. The DAS, which reported directly to the president, had been plagued by scandal throughout Uribe's two terms.

Among those in custody in the spying scandal was former DAS Deputy Director José Miguel Narváez, according to local news reports. *Semana* reported that the former DAS official also had links to paramilitary leader Carlos Castaño and was being investigated in connection with the murder of journalist Jaime Garzón. A news host on Caracol and a columnist for the newsweekly *Cambio*, Garzón was shot four blocks from his office in 1999. The following year, authorities charged and convicted the paramilitary leader Castaño in absentia. (Castaño, who disappeared in the early part of the decade, is believed to be dead.) In 2009, under the Law of Justice and Peace, a demobilized paramilitary fighter said Narváez had plotted the killing and had urged Castaño to execute it, according to *Semana*. Under the Law of Justice and Peace, members of illegal armed groups are granted leniency in exchange for demobilization and full confession to crimes. Narváez was not immediately charged in the Garzón case; the Law of Justice and Peace has been criticized for eliciting false allegations.

Hollman Morris, a reporter known for his critical coverage of the country's civil conflict, came under fire from the government after he traveled to southwestern Colombia to interview guerrilla fighters for a documentary on kidnappings. On February 1, Morris said, members of the leftist guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) urged him to interview three police officers and a soldier who were being held hostage. The journalist told CPJ that once he realized the hostages' answers had been coerced, he simply asked for their names and their time in captivity. The same day, FARC released the four hostages to a humanitarian mission led by the International Red Cross.

As news of Morris' meeting with the hostages was reported, the government reacted in forceful, rapid-fire fashion. Vice President Francisco Santos Calderón said Morris had acted without "objectivity and impartiality." Then-Minister of Defense Juan Manuel Santos called him "close to the guerrillas." And Uribe accused the journalist of being an "accomplice to terror."

Morris told CPJ that the accusations triggered a string of e-mail threats. On February 5, CPJ and Human Rights Watch sent Uribe a letter objecting to the loaded assertions and urging the president to put an end to comments tying

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Provincial journalists face threats from all sides in civil conflict.
- » Convictions gained in one journalist murder; progress reported in other cases.

2003 KEY STATISTIC
Year that national intelligence agents began spying on journalists and other critics.

journalists to any side in Colombia's armed conflict. CPJ research has shown that such public assertions have endangered journalists. The government has often resorted to such politicized accusations, the New York-based group Human Rights First said at a March hearing of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. Colombian prosecutors, the group said, have brought dozens of unfounded and "specious" criminal investigations against Colombians, including journalists and human rights activists.

Journalists working in the provinces faced harassment from all sides of Colombia's five-decade-long civil conflict. In February, the four hostages released by FARC to the humanitarian mission said the guerrillas had declared local journalists "military targets." In March, two alleged members of the paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) shot Gustavo Adolfo Valencia Ayala inside his home in the eastern city of Popayán. Valencia, director of national radio station Todelar, suffered a leg wound. In April, six unidentified assailants held Gustavo Álvarez Gardeazábal, host of the political program "La Luciérnaga" on national Caracol Radio, at gunpoint in his home in the western city of Tuluá. The attackers ransacked the journalist's house but did not harm him. A security camera recorded the assailants as they fled, and investigators identified the truck they were driving as a military vehicle. The army denied involvement, and Uribe offered 20 million pesos (US\$10,000) for information on the case.

One journalist was killed in connection to his work. José Everardo Aguilar, 72, a correspondent for Radio Súper in the southern city of Patía and host of a news program on the community radio station Bolívar Estéreo, was gunned down inside his home in April. Colleagues told CPJ that Aguilar had decried links between local politicians and paramilitaries. One man was charged in the slaying, which the Colombian National Police said was in reprisal for Aguilar's reporting, but a local court acquitted the defendant in November.

Two journalists were killed in unclear circumstances. The bullet-ridden body of Diego de Jesús Rojas Velásquez, a reporter and cameraman for Supía TV, was found in September on a highway in the central city of Supía. In December, Harold Humberto Rivas Quevedo, host of a political commentary show on CNC Bugavisión, was shot shortly after leaving the television station's studios in the western city of Buga. CPJ was examining whether the killings were work-related.

Authorities reported progress in an eight-year-old murder case. Two former paramilitary fighters confessed under the Law of Justice and Peace to the 2001 killing of Flavio Iván Bedoya, a regional correspondent for the Bogotá-based Communist Party daily *Voz*. Bedoya, shot as he stepped off a bus in the southwestern port city of Tumaco, had published critical reports on ties between local security forces and paramilitary groups in Nariño province. According to an April report by the Bogotá-based press freedom group Fundación para la Libertad de

Prensa, paramilitary fighters have confessed under the law to participation in seven other journalist murders.

In a landmark case in the fight against impunity, a court in northern Santander province convicted three former public officials on charges of plotting the 2003 murder of radio commentator José Emeterio Rivas. The prosecution's key witness was demobilized paramilitary fighter Pablo Emilio Quintero Dodino, who confessed to the shooting during a Law of Justice and Peace hearing. Former Barrancabermeja Mayor Julio César Ardila Torres was sentenced to 28 years in prison, while former public works officials Abelardo Rueda Tobón and Fabio Pajón Lizcano each received sentences of 26 years and eight months. Rivas, 44, a commentator for the local Radio Calor Estéreo, was killed in retaliation for his reports on official corruption and links between Ardila's administration and paramilitary groups, the Attorney General's office said.

CUBA

CUBA WAS HIT HARD BY THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ENDURED an upheaval in its highest offices, but state-controlled news media delivered superficial and skewed coverage. Human rights conditions, including press freedom, remained at a standstill: Independent journalists faced ongoing harassment, and more than 20 reporters and editors remained in jail. But offering a flicker of hope for freedom of expression on the island, a growing community of independent bloggers maneuvered around legal, economic, and technological limitations to describe every-

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

» Vibrant blogging culture emerges despite severe Internet restrictions.

» Jailed journalists suffer amid inhumane conditions.

KEY STATISTIC

22 Reporters and editors in jail as of December 1, 2009.

day experiences and express opinions that challenged the regime's perspective.

Cuba was one of the 10 Worst Countries to Be a Blogger, according to an April analysis by CPJ. But because the government so harshly represses other media, the Internet has become the one means by which Cubans are able to exercise free expression. The government estimates Internet penetration at 13 percent, although independent estimates are much lower.

Regardless, the Internet in Cuba is extremely slow and expensive, and legal

restrictions are among the toughest in the world. An inter-ministry commission has authority to regulate “the information that comes from worldwide information webs,” purportedly to ensure the country’s security and defense. A government agency approves all Internet connections, leaving only foreigners and a handful of intellectuals, high-ranking officials, doctors, and academics with personal access to the Web. Other Cubans went online at government-run cybercafés, hotels, embassies, and highly monitored student centers. Cubans were not allowed to purchase consumer electronics, including personal computers, until 2008. Computers remained difficult to find.

For all those difficulties, Cuba became home to a small but vibrant blogging community, one that CPJ described in a September special report, “Chronicling Cuba, Bloggers Offer Fresh Hope.” CPJ found that at least 25 independent, journalistic, and regularly updated blogs were being produced by Cuban writers in 2009. Most bloggers interviewed by CPJ were under age 35 and defined themselves as part of the post-revolutionary youth. Like the independent press, they reported on everyday experiences, pinpointing food shortages and problems in education, housing, and health.

Bloggers wrote at home, sometimes on computers cobbled together from black-market parts. Although they occasionally posted directly to their blogs from island cybercafés, they more generally e-mailed their information to friends living abroad who then posted their entries. Bloggers, frequently unable to read their own posts online, were aware that their Internet audience was predominantly overseas. So they saved their work to CDs that were distributed to independent libraries on the island, or they printed hard copies of their entries and bound them into impromptu publications that were passed from hand to hand.

Although it might seem surprising, Cubans have a long tradition in online journalism. The roots of online Cuban journalism can be found in the independent press movement that flourished from the mid-1990s into this decade. Using basic journalistic tools for their reporting, these independent reporters have long made a practice of phoning, faxing, or e-mailing their stories to foreign-based news Web sites. But the new generation of bloggers differed from their predecessors in the independent press movement, most of whom were opposition activists with strong political views. Bloggers generally avoided links to dissident groups, and tended not to criticize the Castro regime directly, CPJ research showed. As a consequence—or perhaps due to a generational disconnect between the young bloggers and the country’s aging leaders—authorities have not cracked down as hard on the blogging community as they did on the independent press. Twenty-nine independent journalists were jailed in a massive 2003 crackdown on dissent; most of them remained in prison in 2009.

Nonetheless, a number of bloggers told CPJ that they had been summoned

by authorities for questioning and threatened with sanctions, including imprisonment, if they did not stop writing. In November, state security agents detained, assaulted, and harassed Yoani Sánchez, an internationally recognized blogger, and two fellow bloggers, Claudia Cadelo and Omar Luís Pardo Lazo. Authorities also revoked Sánchez’s permission to travel outside the country.

Bloggers and independent journalists filing to overseas news outlets continued to cover issues that were ignored by the official media. As some of Cuba’s most powerful officials and well-known Fidel Castro loyalists—including Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque and Vice President Carlos Lage—were removed from office in March, the news was briefly reported at the end of an official TV newscast. A day later, the official dailies, the only ones available in Cuba, printed the resignation letters without comment or context. Bloggers questioned the reasons behind the decision and the repercussions these changes would have on the island. Independent writers such as Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, president of the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation, and Oscar Espinosa Chepe, a formerly imprisoned journalist, discussed the developments in opinion pieces.

In July, President Raúl Castro spoke about the severe impact of the global fiscal crisis on the island, and announced spending cuts to revitalize the economy. The island’s official press responded with superficial editorials calling on Cubans to “save” and “be understanding.” Bloggers and independent journalists reported on citizens’ varied responses. Many stories, CPJ found, were critical of the regime’s policies and the possible repercussions on daily life.

Bloggers developed strong global connections and created new means of getting information out of Cuba, allowing them to highlight problems that would otherwise go unreported locally and internationally, CPJ research found. International outlets sought out their opinion and, at times, published their work. In September, the blogging community hit another milestone. An association of Cuban bloggers sent Twitter messages for the first time from the island announcing the winners of the first local blogging contest, according to a report in *The Miami Herald*. This kind of international attention could provide bloggers (and independent reporters) with some protection from harassment and imprisonment.

In April, U.S. President Barack Obama lifted restrictions on visits and the sending of money to Cuba by Americans with family on the island, but he ruled out termination of the decades-long U.S. embargo. Obama said his administration was willing to talk to Castro’s government, and he urged Cuba to reciprocate with human rights improvements, *The Associated Press* reported. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Cuba should “open up to outside opinions and media.” President Castro responded swiftly, stating that Cuba was willing to discuss the issues but calling as well for the release of five Cubans imprisoned

in the United States on espionage charges, according to AP. Later that week, an opinion piece by former President Fidel Castro in the state-owned daily *Juventud Rebelde* seemed to row back the Cuban response. Fidel Castro said Obama had “misinterpreted” his younger brother, and he asserted that all political prisoners in Cuba were actually “mercenaries at the service of a foreign power.”

Before the Trinidad and Tobago Summit of the Americas in April, CPJ lobbied the Obama administration to ensure that human rights in Cuba, including the release of political prisoners and free press conditions, would be part of the agenda. CPJ did much the same before a March visit by Louis Michel, European commissioner for development and humanitarian aid. CPJ urged Michel to call on Cuban leaders to improve human rights, ensure humanitarian organizations can visit Cuban prisons, and release all jailed journalists. In June, as the Council of the European Union passed a resolution calling for a results-oriented dialogue with the island state, CPJ reiterated its call on European leaders, underscoring that the Cuban government must grant all Cubans freedom of information and expression, including uncensored access to the Internet.

But regional and international organizations had only limited success in linking human rights to improved relations with Cuba. In June, the Organization of American States (OAS) lifted its 47-year suspension of Cuba as a member. The reincorporation, regional leaders warned, would not be immediate but would happen through a mechanism that would require Cuba to improve its human rights record, international press reports said. The Castro administration responded by declining OAS membership. In January, Manfred Nowak, the U.N. special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment, announced that following an invitation from the Cuban government, he would visit the island before 2010, according to the Spanish news service EFE. Nowak told reporters that he planned to meet with all kinds of prisoners and their families, as well as members of the dissident movement and government officials. By year’s end, though, a visit had not been scheduled.

Twenty-two journalists remained jailed in 2009 in Cuba, making it one of the world’s leading jailers of journalists. Among the imprisoned were 20 journalists detained during the 2003 crackdown. In May, Albert Santiago Du Bouchet Hernández was given a three-year sentence on charges of disrespect and distributing enemy propaganda. Du Bouchet Hernández had previously spent a year in jail.

Imprisoned journalists in Cuba continued to live in inhumane conditions, inside tiny, windowless cells or alongside dozens of common criminals in gigantic warehouses. Food was often rotten and sanitary conditions were poor. Many jailed journalists suffered from significant ailments, including heart, lung, and skin diseases, which had developed or worsened during their imprisonment.

CPJ research found that at least 10 had engaged in lengthy and dangerous hunger strikes in 2009 to protest the poor conditions of their imprisonment. Many sought greater access to priests and doctors, along with better food.

Among the reporters who remained behind bars was Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, who in 2008 was awarded CPJ’s International Press Freedom Award. Maseda Gutiérrez, 66, a founding member of the independent news agency Grupo de Trabajo Decoro, was arrested during the second day of the massive government crackdown in 2003. Despite several appeals from his family to Cuban authorities, the journalist was being held at the maximum security Agüica Prison in western Matanzas province without medical attention for high blood pressure and a worsening skin condition, his wife, Laura Pollán Toledo, said. Maseda Gutiérrez continued to smuggle reports from prison describing poor conditions and human rights violations.

Outside prison walls, journalists’ families continued to be harassed. In August, 72-year-old Graciela González-Degard, whose brother, Ricardo González Alfonso, was being held at Havana’s Combinado del Este Prison, described to CPJ a two-week trip to Cuba. González-Degard said state security agents questioned and threatened her, while prison authorities denied her planned visits and rebuffed family requests to provide the journalist with clean clothes. She said Cuban authorities had blacklisted her brother’s wife and two teenage sons from working, and routinely revoked González Alfonso’s privileges as punishment for his protests. Other families whose members are vocal human rights activists told CPJ that secret police agents follow them, tap their phones, and hack into their e-mail accounts.

Independent journalists reporting from the streets were similarly targeted by local authorities. State security officers repeatedly detained and questioned Roberto de Jesús Guerra Perez, director of the Havana-based Hablemos Press. After a four-day detention in March, Guerra Perez told CPJ that he had been continuously and aggressively threatened before being released. His wife, Ismari Salomón Carcases, said her husband had been detained at least 50 times in 2008.

Other independent reporters in Havana and the provinces were briefly detained during the year. In May, state security agents warned independent journalist Julio Beltrán that if he continued writing, he would be imprisoned, the Miami-based news Web site *Cubanet* reported. A month earlier, Yudelmis Fonseca, a 25-year-old reporter in Havana for the independent news agency Centro de Información de Derechos Humanos de Cuba, was fired from her state job without explanation, *Cubanet* reported. Fonseca said she had previously been detained several times.

Nonetheless, like the young independent blogging community, other Cubans

continued to express their dissatisfaction by posting messages online that at times were heavily critical of the Castro regime. The case of Juan Carlos González, known as Panfilo, a Havana man who was caught on tape screaming that the Cuban people were dying of hunger, gained international attention after his video received thousands of views on YouTube. In August, a Cuban court sentenced Panfilo to two years in prison for “social dangerousness.” He was released three weeks later after a rare successful appeal.

ECUADOR

RE-ELECTED BY A LANDSLIDE IN APRIL, PRESIDENT RAFAEL CORREA intensified his attacks on critical news media, calling them ignorant and deceitful. As Correa used his weekly radio address to assail the press, his administration singled out critical outlets for regulatory action. Legislators were debating media legislation that would restrict freedom of expression, and two journalists were imprisoned during the year on defamation charges.

So focused was Correa on disagreements with the press that he added a segment, “Press Freedom Is Now for All,” to his Saturday morning address in order to air his disputes. Among the outlets most frequently targeted were the national dailies *El Universo*, *La Hora*, *El Comercio*, and *El Expreso*, and the television network Teleamazonas. The president described such news outlets as “a sewer,” “ignorant,” “trash talking,” “liars,” “unethical,” “mediocre,” and “political actors who are trying to oppose the revolutionary government.”

Teleamazonas, a Quito-based private broadcaster and harsh critic of the administration, became the focus of government regulators. In late December, regulators ordered Teleamazonas off the air for three days after finding the station had “incited public disorder” with a May story exploring the potential effect that natural gas exploration off southern Puná Island would have on the local fishing industry, according to news reports.

The National Council of Radio and Television (CONARTEL) had cited

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Correa assails news media, and regulators target critical outlets.
- » Media legislation would restrict freedom of expression.

KEY STATISTIC

3

Days that regulators ordered Teleamazonas off the air.

the network twice earlier in the year. After Teleamazonas aired a bullfighting commercial during an 8:30 p.m. slot in February, CONARTEL cited the station for violating a 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. ban on bullfight broadcasts, according to news accounts and CPJ interviews. When Teleamazonas aired a news story in May that questioned the legality of a vote-counting facility in the coastal city of Guayaquil, regulators said the station violated Article 58 of the Broadcasting Law, which prohibits airing “news based on unfounded allegations that could produce social unrest.” The station was fined only nominal amounts in the first two cases. But by building a record of supposed violations during the year, regulators were able to invoke the late-year suspension.

In his public comments, Correa had fanned the regulatory flames. In August, the president called for regulators to shutter Teleamazonas after the station aired an audio recording of a 2008 presidential palace discussion about constitutional changes, according to local news reports.

César Ricaurte, executive director of the local press freedom group Fundamedios, said the president’s verbal assaults created a climate for physical attacks against the press. In May and December, unidentified individuals tossed homemade explosives outside the Quito offices of Teleamazonas, press reports said. No injuries were reported. In February, unidentified assailants in Guayaquil fired 12 gunshots at the offices of the weekly *Mi Pueblo* after the publication of a series of articles criticizing Correa’s administration.

In late year, a legislative committee drafted a repressive communications bill that would set educational requirements for journalists, stiffen criminal penalties for press offenses, and allow some government censorship. The bill drew strong public and news media opposition, prompting the National Assembly in December to postpone action and pledge revisions. The communications bill is among legislation intended to implement a new constitution adopted by voters in 2008. The constitution itself contains provisions troubling to press freedom advocates, including Article 19, which states that the government “will regulate the prevalence of informational, educational, and cultural content in the media’s programming and will promote the creation of spaces for national and independent producers.”

The regulatory system itself underwent an overhaul. In August, Correa signed a decree creating the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information, which, among other things, took over the regulatory activities of both CONARTEL and the National Council of Telecommunications.

The government retained control of two television stations, TC Televisión and Gamavisión, that it had confiscated in 2008. The government alleged that the stations’ owners had ties to a business conglomerate accused of causing the 1998 collapse of the Ecuadoran banking institution, Filibanco. The stations’ owners

denied the accusations. The government placed two journalists with close ties to Correa in charge of the stations, and said it would auction them to recoup US\$661 million it said was owed to Filibanco's investors. By late 2009, though, both stations remained under official control.

Violence and obstruction were reported in provincial areas. Several individuals burst into the offices shared by local TV station Telecosta and Radio Gaviota in the northern city of Esmeraldas in April and destroyed the outlets' broadcasting equipment, Fundamedios reported. According to Telecosta's president, the attack was likely retribution for stories criticizing local authorities. Later that month, a group of protesters in the southern province of El Oro besieged the offices of local radio station Onda Sur and warned the staff to stop reporting critically on a local mayor's bid for re-election, the regional press freedom group Instituto Prensa y Sociedad (IPYS) said. In May, assailants believed to be from the same group broke the station's windows, sprayed the building with gasoline, and lit it on fire, IPYS reported. The building sustained minor damage.

In the country's interior, police routinely harassed and detained local journalists, press freedom advocates reported. Francisco Farinango, a reporter for the local Radio Intipacho in the northern Pichincha region, was briefly detained in January while reporting on a protest by the indigenous Tupigachi community against a law that allows for mineral extraction in their territory, according to local press freedom groups. That same month, Adolfo Caiminagua Herrera, a correspondent in the southern city of Machala for the national daily *Diario Opinión*, was arrested while photographing police at a local voting center. Israel Díaz, a cameraman for the local TV station Lago Sistema Televisión in the province of Sucumbíos, was beaten by police officers as he attempted to cover a routine police operation in April, the groups said. Díaz was not seriously hurt, but his colleague, Vicente Albán, a reporter for the same station, was detained for several hours.

In June, the Criminal Court of El Oro sentenced Milton Nelson Chacaguasay Flores, director of the weekly publication *La Verdad* in the city of Machala, to four months in prison on libel charges. The case stemmed from a 2007 story accusing Finance Minister Francisco Quevedo Madrid of having links to a man charged in a nationwide Ponzi scheme. Chacaguasay had barely been out of prison when the sentence was imposed. He had been freed in May after serving most of a 10-month prison sentence on separate libel charges.

A second journalist was jailed on defamation charges during the year. Freddy Aponte Aponte, a reporter for local radio station Luz y Vida in the southwestern city of Loja, was released in January after serving most of a six-month term. He had been convicted of defaming a former mayor.

HONDURAS

THE JUNE COUP THAT OUSTED PRESIDENT MANUEL ZELAYA, ALONG WITH the bitter stalemate that ensued, damaged press freedom in Honduras and heightened partisan divisions in the news media. An interim government cracked down on news coverage and withstood intense international pressure until a scheduled November presidential election brought Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo, a conservative businessman, to office. As Lobo pledged reconciliation, Zelaya decried the vote as tainted.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Coup damages press freedom, reveals partisan media divide.
- » Supporters of both sides in the conflict wage attacks on the press.

KEY STATISTIC

22

Days that Radio Globo and Canal 36 were off the air due to government censorship.

The election divided the regional and international community. The United States, which initially sought to reverse the coup, ultimately backed the vote as credible, as did several other nations. Venezuela, whose leader, Hugo Chávez, was a strong Zelaya supporter, refused to recognize the election, joining regional powers Brazil and Argentina in dismissing the vote as tainted. International electoral groups declined to monitor the vote, *The Washington Post* noted, because of the political conflict and irregularities such as the silencing of pro-Zelaya media.

The political crisis began June 28 when Zelaya—who was pursuing a controversial proposal to eliminate presidential term limits—was arrested by the army and put on a plane to Costa Rica. As veteran congressional leader Roberto Micheletti was sworn in as interim president, security forces closed local broadcasters, blocked transmission of international networks, and briefly detained reporters, CPJ research showed.

A day after the coup, armed soldiers arrested five foreign correspondents and two support workers inside their hotel in the capital, Tegucigalpa. Adriana Sivori, a reporter for the Venezuelan government-backed regional network Telesur, her producer María José Díaz, and her cameraman Larry Sánchez were detained, along with Nicolás García and Esteban Felix, a video journalist and photographer reporting for The Associated Press, and their two unidentified assistants. All of them were released a short time later, according to CPJ interviews. Cable television transmissions were blocked intermittently during the 48 hours after the coup, interrupting coverage from CNN and Telesur. By using law enforcement

to restrict news coverage immediately after the coup, the de facto government created an information vacuum that kept many Hondurans unaware of what was happening in their own country.

Press freedom conditions suffered further blows as supporters of both sides launched attacks on the press. The interim government took aim at pro-Zelaya outlets: Privately owned Radio Globo and television station Canal 36, both of which were critical of the interim government, were forced off the air several times. The longest interruption began September 28, when security forces raided their offices and confiscated equipment. The two outlets were taken off the air under the provisions of a government decree announced that same day. The decree, which suspended constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties, appeared to be aimed at suppressing turnout for a Zelaya rally planned that day in Tegucigalpa, but it was also used to justify media raids. Article 4 of the decree authorized the National Telecommunications Commission to suspend broadcasters for “statements that attack peace and the public order, or which offend the human dignity of public officials, or attack the law.” Both news outlets were allowed to return to the air on October 20.

Reporters working for the mainstream press, most of which were aligned with the caretaker administration, also reported harassment and attacks. In August, unidentified assailants hurled at least three homemade explosive devices at the offices of *El Heraldo*, the Tegucigalpa-based national daily viewed as supportive of Micheletti, according to press reports. The bombs exploded near the paper’s main entrances but caused no injuries and only minor damage. Rosángela Soto, a reporter and TV host with the pro-coup media group Televisión Centro, told CPJ that her colleagues had been beaten and threatened by Zelaya militants, deterring them from covering demonstrations supporting the ousted president. On November 4, assailants hurled an explosive device at the Tegucigalpa offices of Radio HRN, a station seen as supportive of the caretaker administration. Two HRN employees were injured.

Honduran reporters and advocates said that during the tense political standoff most TV stations covered protests favoring Micheletti, while ignoring those supporting Zelaya. Reports from radio outlets, except a few pro-Zelaya stations, were more balanced but still delivered more information on the interim government.

Arturo Wallace Salinas, who covers Central America for the BBC, told CPJ that the Honduran media’s performance “resembled what happened in Venezuela [in 2002], ignoring facts or only broadcasting the views of the new officials.” When Venezuela’s Chávez was briefly ousted in 2002, prominent broadcasters were widely accused of slanting coverage in favor of the coup leaders. (Chávez also accused them of plotting the coup, an assertion

they denied.)

Alexis Quiroz, executive director of the Committee for Freedom of Expression (C-Libre), a Honduran press freedom group, said slanted coverage could be seen in Zelaya’s first, unsuccessful attempt to return to Honduras. After the Honduran military blocked the airport’s runway to prevent Zelaya’s flight from landing, soldiers opened fire on his supporters, leaving at least two dead and dozens injured. Most TV stations, Quiroz said, ignored the news and aired an official, interim government event instead.

In August, Zelaya accused several media owners of planning the coup. He named two former presidents—Carlos Roberto Flores Facussé, owner of the daily *La Tribuna*, and Ricardo Maduro, a principal in Radio Cadena Voces—along with José Rafael Ferrari, owner of the Televisión Centro and Emisoras Unidas groups, and Jorge Canahuati Llarach, a principal in the dailies *El Heraldo* and *La Prensa*. But Zelaya provided no evidence of any direct involvement in the takeover.

Tensions further escalated after Zelaya secretly returned from exile on September 21 and sought refuge in the Brazilian Embassy. Zelaya’s return created a nervous standoff as he demanded to retake the presidency and Micheletti threatened him with arrest if he set foot outside the embassy. After intensive international negotiations, the interim government agreed to allow Zelaya to return to office after the November election so he could serve out the remaining two months of his term. Under the deal, the presidential vote would be recognized by both sides, and neither Zelaya nor Micheletti would be candidates. But the agreement soon fell apart: Zelaya urged his supporters to boycott the election, and he later alleged fraud in the balloting. Congress, in turn, voted in December to block Zelaya’s reinstatement.

Throughout, the political dispute was echoed in media advertising. As part of a campaign intended to damage Zelaya’s reputation, the interim government produced a number of television ads alleging that the ousted president had stolen millions from the Central Bank. On the other side, analysts noted, Zelaya persuaded media allies such as Radio Globo and Canal 36 to air his unusual, unsubstantiated allegations that Israeli commandos had been hired to murder him.

Two reporters were killed in unclear circumstances. Rafael Munguía Ortiz, a correspondent for Radio Cadena Voces, was killed in a drive-by shooting in the northwestern town of San Pedro Sula in March, according to news reports. In July, an unidentified assailant shot broadcast and newspaper reporter Gabriel Fino Noriega as he was leaving radio station Estelar in the northern town of San Juan Pueblo, police told CPJ. No arrests were reported in either case. CPJ was investigating the deaths to determine whether they were work-related.

MEXICO

THE DEEPENING INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZED CRIME AND THE GOVERNMENT'S inability to curb worsening violence left the news media wide open to attack. In the last 10 years alone, CPJ research shows, 32 editors and reporters have been killed, at least 11 in direct reprisal for their work. Nine more journalists have disappeared since 2005. Most of those targeted had covered organized crime, drug trafficking, or government corruption—topics that journalists say they increasingly avoid in fear of reprisal. Reforms that would impose special penalties for attacks on the press and give the federal government broad authority to prosecute crimes against free expression were stalled in Congress.

Organized crime continued a decade-long emergence in major cities. Powerful drug-trafficking organizations, which originally exported narcotics to the United States, have extended their reach to street sales, extortion, and kidnapping. Rival groups fighting for urban markets routinely murdered one another's members, and bribed or killed police officers and public officials. Nowhere were the effects of organized crime more evident than in Ciudad Juárez, a border city across from El Paso, Texas. Since late 2007, two large cartels have battled for control of the city's drug sales and other rackets. Although the federal government deployed 10,000 soldiers and federal police officers to Ciudad Juárez, the number of drug-related murders had reached nearly 2,000 by late October, surpassing the toll for all of 2008, according to officials and news reports. Almost all of the murders went unpunished.

Though crime and drug trafficking are the biggest issues in Ciudad Juárez, journalists extensively censor their work on those vital topics, CPJ's Mike O'Connor wrote in a June special report. "We have learned the lesson: To survive, we publish the minimum," said Alfredo Quijano, editor-in-chief of *Norte de Ciudad Juárez*, referring to his newspaper's practice of self-censorship. "We don't investigate. Even at that, most of what we know stays in the reporter's notebook." Many journalists said the November 2008 killing of Armando Rodríguez Carreón, a veteran crime reporter, served as a warning to the entire press corps in Ciudad Juárez. The case, unsolved in late year, also illustrated the dysfunctional

state of law enforcement. While the state prosecutor claimed to have given federal authorities the names and locations of several suspects, federal officials said they had no leads and no suspects. In July, the lead federal investigator working on the case was shot to death. His replacement was murdered less than a month later.

In north-central Mexico, journalists pointed to another murder to highlight the pattern of violence and intimidation. On May 25, assailants abducted crime reporter Eliseo Barrón Hernández from his home in Torreón, Durango state, as the journalist's wife and two young daughters watched, according to news accounts and CPJ interviews. His body, a gunshot wound to the head, was found the next day in an irrigation ditch. In June, the federal prosecutor's office said a man detained by the Mexican army had confessed to Barrón's murder and had implicated several others, news reports said. The alleged attacker, who claimed to work for the criminal organization Los Zetas, told interrogators that Barrón had been killed to warn other journalists not to report on the group. The case was pending in late year. Los Zetas has become Mexico's most feared criminal gang, operating along the Gulf Coast, the Yucatán Peninsula, and into Guatemala as well as in the Mexico City area and western Mexico.

A second slaying in Durango heightened anxiety. On November 2, Bladimir Antuna García was found murdered after being abducted from a street in the city of Durango, according to news reports and CPJ research. Antuna, a reporter for the daily *El Tiempo de Durango*, appeared to have been strangled. The journalist, who had received several death threats, had recently broken a story on corruption in the Durango City Police Department.

Six other journalists were killed in 2009 in unclear circumstances. Photographer Jean Paul Ibarra Ramírez was shot to death in the town of Iguala, Guerrero state, in January. Reporter Carlos Ortega Samper was pulled out of his pickup truck and shot in the mountains of Durango state in May. In July, authorities found the body of Acapulco radio anchorman Juan Daniel Martínez Gil, beaten and suffocated. Norberto Miranda Madrid, who covered crime in northern Chihuahua, was shot to death inside his office in September. José Galindo Robles, director of Radio Universidad de Guadalajara, was found in his home in western Jalisco state in November with a fatal blow to the head. And in December, José Alberto Velázquez López, publisher of a newspaper in the southeastern state of Quintana Roo, was shot as he left an office holiday party. CPJ was investigating the killings to determine whether they were linked to the journalists' work.

Two crime reporters went missing in late year. José Luis Romero, a radio reporter in Sinaloa state, was abducted outside a restaurant in December, while María Esther Aguilar Cansimbe, a Michoacán newspaper journalist, vanished after getting a phone tip in November. Seven other reporters disappeared between 2005 and 2008, CPJ research shows.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Amid threats and attacks, self-censorship becomes more pervasive.
- » Congress stalls on reforms to combat violence against the press.

KEY STATISTIC

9 Journalists missing since 2005. Most had covered crime and corruption.

Widespread corruption has rendered the criminal justice system so dysfunctional that most journalist killings remain unsolved. In the few cases where authorities have obtained convictions, CPJ research shows, questions have emerged about the culpability of the accused. One such case, the 2007 murder of Amado Ramírez Dillanes, Acapulco correspondent for Televisa, was officially closed in March when a defendant was sentenced to 38 years in prison. But in Acapulco, where Ramírez was a star journalist, colleagues said authorities had allowed the real murderers to go free. The National Human Rights Commission later found that police had tortured the defendant and manipulated evidence.

CPJ research shows that local and state authorities in Mexico have been particularly ineffective in solving press-related crimes—and, in some instances, appear to have been complicit. In a 2008 report, CPJ examined the possible involvement of local police and public officials in the disappearances of several journalists since 2005. At least five missing reporters had investigated links between local officials and organized crime in the weeks before they vanished.

Congress moved in fits and starts to combat crimes against the press. The Chamber of Deputies approved a measure in April imposing special penalties for crimes against “journalistic activity.” The bill would impose penalties of up to five years in prison for anyone who “impedes, interferes, limits, or attacks journalistic activity.” Sentences could be doubled if the assailant were a public official. The measure was pending in the Senate in late year.

The legislation, if passed, would be an encouraging but preliminary step in combating deadly violence against the press, a CPJ analysis found. The enactment of new penalties, CPJ found, would have a significant effect only if accompanied by adoption of a constitutional amendment granting federal authorities the jurisdiction to prosecute all crimes against free expression. The proposed amendment was still before the Chamber of Deputies in late year. In a setback for press freedom, the Chamber of Deputies decided to disband a special committee examining violence against the press. The committee, created in 2006, had helped keep anti-press violence in the public eye.

Reporters and photographers in several states told CPJ about threats, beatings, and arbitrary detentions at the hands of local police officers and soldiers. While some filed complaints with state and federal authorities, others told CPJ they were too afraid to file official reports. In at least one case, a provincial reporter, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisal, told CPJ he had received a death threat from a high-ranking police official.

Emilio Gutiérrez Soto, a Chihuahua journalist who fled to the United States after facing harassment, was awaiting a decision in late year on his application for political asylum. Gutiérrez Soto, a correspondent for *El Diario del Noroeste* in Nuevo Casas Grandes, fled Chihuahua in 2008 after being threatened by military

personnel in response to articles alleging human rights abuses.

CPJ documented four instances in which buildings housing news organizations or their employees were attacked. In January, gunmen hurled a grenade and shot at the premises of national broadcaster Televisa in Monterrey. (A spokesman for Televisa later told CPJ that its crime reporters had been using bulletproof vests for more than a year.) The next month, assailants shot at the home of the editor of *El Debate*, a daily newspaper in Guasave, in the state of Sinaloa. The weekly *Ríodoce*, which covers drug trafficking in Sinaloa, was hit by an explosion in September that caused structural damage. In each case, senior editors said they weren’t sure why they had been targeted. No arrests were made in any of the cases.

In August, the federal government released a controversial report into the killing of Bradley Will, a U.S. documentary filmmaker. Will was shot in November 2006 while filming clashes in Oaxaca between antigovernment protesters and supporters of Gov. Ulises Ruiz. Despite photographic evidence that pro-government gunmen were shooting from a distance at demonstrators and journalists—including Will—authorities concluded that the fatal shots had instead been fired by a protester at close range. In October 2008, a Mexican judge ruled that there was enough evidence to bring Juan Manuel Martínez to trial for Will’s killing. Martínez remained in jail in late year. No witness has placed Martínez at the scene, no motive has been disclosed, and no weapon has been produced.

The government’s report on the Will case contradicted findings by the National Human Rights Commission and Physicians for Human Rights, a Boston-based independent organization, both of which concluded that the two bullets that struck Will had been fired from a distance of 130 to 165 feet (40 to 50 meters). The government report also contradicted the autopsy, which found that the wounds to Will’s body and damage to his clothing were consistent with long-range shots.

NICARAGUA

THREE DECADES AFTER A REVOLUTION SWEEPED THE SANDINISTAS INTO POWER, the government of President Daniel Ortega still cast private media as enemies and moved forcefully to curtail their influence. Ortega—who led the 1979 uprising against the Somoza dictatorship and reclaimed the presidency in 2006 elections—employed a range of tactics to marginalize the press, including legal persecution, smear campaigns to discredit adversaries, and manipulation of state advertising to punish critical outlets.

The administration ignored private media outlets and disparaged their work. Local reporters had no access to Ortega or his close advisers, and were often excluded from government events. Ortega himself remained an elusive figure: His agenda

was a political mystery and his health a state secret, although reports widely speculated that the president had lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease. The Sandinista leader had not given a press conference since he took office in early 2007.

First Lady Rosario Murillo, a virtual prime minister who manages all of the government's communications, exerted strict control over Ortega's agenda. Officials in the executive branch were allowed to talk to the press only with her permission. Except for contact with a few pro-government outlets controlled by the president's family or the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) party, the Nicaraguan leader kept himself out of the public eye. Officials said that his isolation from public scrutiny sought to ensure that the administration's views reached the public "uncontaminated" by critical media.

The government was not interested in communicating with the Nicaraguan people through the media, Human Rights Ombudsman Omar Cabezas told CPJ during a visit in April. "We establish our own agenda: We talk when we want, to say what we want," said Nicaragua's top human rights official.

CPJ documented the president's aggressive stance toward the press in a July special report. In the report, "Daniel Ortega's Media War," CPJ urged the administration to ensure that the media receive equitable access and treatment; that it halt legal harassment and smear efforts; and that it end the use of inflammatory anti-press language. Ortega's animosity toward the press, CPJ found, was driven by decades-old resentment with roots in the first Sandinista government.

Supporters of Ortega took issue with CPJ's findings. Roberto Larios Meléndez, president of the Union of Nicaraguan Journalists, said the report "looked like a document written by the [U.S.] State Department in the 1980s," and called it part of the "low-intensity war that the Nicaraguan far-right is fighting to oust the government with the support of international organizations." Larios' criticism echoed rhetoric used by Ortega to vilify press critics as either CIA sponsored or oligarchy controlled. Larios did not dispute the factual elements of CPJ's report.

An April report by the Media Observatory at the Center for Media Investigations (CINCO), a nonprofit that promotes media research, also found that the administration pursued an adversarial media agenda. "Ortega is living a revolution déjà vu: Thirty years after the FSLN victory the enemy is still the same," wrote the report's author, Eduardo Marengo. The Sandinista leader himself used similar language in a March interview with Al-Jazeera English, saying that Nicaragua is fighting "a media war, a war of ideas."

The government used the official media apparatus—composed of Channel 4 television, Nueva Radio Ya, and the news Web site *El 19*—to launch character attacks against critics in the media, CPJ research showed. In March, for example, Channel 4 aired a series of ads attacking the director of the Managua-based daily *El Nuevo Diario*, Francisco Chamorro, and its news editor, Danilo Aguirre, as "fas-

cists." The paper's dismissal of reporter Eloisa Ibarra became pretext for a smear campaign that included a photo montage linking Chamorro and Aguirre to Nazi swastikas. Ibarra said she was fired for union activism; *El Nuevo Diario* said it was over her performance.

The most egregious example of government intimidation was aimed at Carlos Fernando Chamorro, former editor of the Sandinista magazine *Barricada* in the 1980s, who now runs the magazine *Confidencial*, serves as president of CINCO, and hosts the television news programs "Esta Semana" (This Week) and "Esta Noche" (This

Night). Chamorro is one of the most critical and best-known journalists in the country. It was on "Esta Semana" that Chamorro exposed a multimillion-dollar extortion scheme involving the Sandinista Party and influence peddling in the judiciary.

After the story aired in 2007, Channel 4 and Nueva Radio Ya broadcast unfounded ads connecting Chamorro to international drug trafficking. The government intensified its attack in September 2008, launching an inquiry into whether CINCO and other nonprofits were illegally funneling foreign investments to other civil society groups. CINCO's Managua offices were raided and Chamorro was interrogated.

In February 2009, after an international outcry, the Attorney General's office dropped the criminal case against CINCO and the other organizations. Chamorro credited international attention for the government's decision to drop the matter. "Thanks to this wave of national and international solidarity, this case set a precedent: When citizens are right and express the truth, especially when they are driven to resist and not to be intimidated, sooner or later the government will have to take a step back," he wrote in *Confidencial*.

Private media executives complained about a biased system of distributing government advertising that effectively punished critical outlets while rewarding supportive press. The Sandinista government spent 80 percent of its US\$3.5 million advertising budget in 2007-08 for spots on Channel 4, which is run by Ortega's sons, according to *Confidencial*. Administration officials said they were following practices established by their predecessors. Preceding governments, for example, had boycotted Sandinista media, human rights ombudsman

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Ortega administration marginalizes private media.
- » Authorities use legal harassment, smears against critics.

KEY STATISTIC

○ Number of press conferences held by Ortega since taking office.

Cabezas argued.

In September, Nicaraguan authorities organized a forum for FSLN-affiliated journalists that, among other things, proclaimed mainstream media—including television channels 2, 8, 10, and 12, as well as the dailies *La Prensa*, and *El Nuevo Diario*—to be “enemies” of the Ortega government. A bill before Congress would require all journalists to have authorization from a Sandinista journalist group, the Nicaraguan Journalists Association, to work in any media. The bill sparked immediate opposition from independent journalists who said it was an obvious attempt to regulate the profession. The bill was pending in late year.

In October, the Supreme Court overturned constitutional prohibitions on consecutive presidential re-election and service of more than two terms, clearing the way for Ortega to run again in 2011. The opposition and the private press harshly criticized the ruling. *El Nuevo Diario* described the decision as a “legal obscenity” and said it was “an assault against the social peace” in Nicaragua. In an editorial, *La Prensa* said that the Supreme Court’s decision was an “absurd and grotesque” attack against the constitution.

UNITED STATES

THE ADMINISTRATION MADE ENCOURAGING STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT of press freedom—including remarks by President Barack Obama on World Press Freedom Day—but the U.S. military continued to jail one overseas journalist without charge or due process. U.S. forces in Iraq were holding Ibrahim Jassam, a freelance photojournalist working for Reuters, despite a local court order that he be released. The military asserted that Jassam posed a threat, but it disclosed no evidence. In September, on the anniversary of Jassam’s 2008 detention, CPJ called on U.S. military forces to either charge or release the journalist.

U.S. immigration authorities detained for 10 days in August a Pakistani journalist who was on his way to the Washington headquarters of the U.S. government-funded Voice of

America. Rahman Bunairee, a reporter for VOA’s Deewa service and a local TV station, had fled Pakistan after Taliban militants blew up his family’s home. The VOA had made arrangements for the journalist to live and work in the United States for one year, but a visa dispute led immigration officials to detain him at Dulles International Airport. Bunairee was released after CPJ and VOA publicized the case.

Pentagon officials in Virginia questioned field commanders in Afghanistan over reports that U.S. forces were profiling and ranking reporters. In August, *Stars and Stripes* obtained confidential documents that The Rendon Group, a private contractor, had prepared for U.S. military commanders in Afghanistan. The documents assessed “the expected sentiment” of several reporters based on a comprehensive profile of their previous coverage, and included suggestions to commanders on how to persuade reporters to provide “more favorable coverage.”

New information shed light on two previous U.S. cases. An oversight report faulted St. Paul, Minn., police for its handling of protests at the 2008 Republican National Convention. An independent review led by former U.S. Attorney Tom Heffelfinger and former Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Luger concluded in January that more than 40 journalists had been arrested, including two Associated Press photographers and three journalists for the nationally syndicated radio and television program “Democracy Now!” The report, submitted to the St. Paul City Council, criticized the police department for ignoring the media’s pre-convention requests to develop a protocol for dealing with reporters covering protests.

In April, new indictments were handed down in connection with the August 2007 murder of *Oakland Post* Editor Chauncey Bailey in California. Alameda County authorities indicted two men in April: Yusef Bey IV and Antoine Mackey. Bey was the proprietor and Mackey an associate with Your Black Muslim Bakery, a local business whose finances Bailey was investigating when he was shot. Authorities had previously charged only Devaughndre Broussard, a former bakery handyman, in the murder. The additional arrests came after the Chauncey Bailey Project, a consortium of Bailey’s colleagues, uncovered a host of irregularities in the Oakland police investigation.

In Washington, some lawmakers pushed for examination of international press freedom conditions, while Obama issued a strong statement in support of World Press Freedom Day. “It is a day in which we celebrate the indispensable role played by journalists in exposing abuses of power, while we sound the alarm about the growing number of journalists silenced by death or jail as they attempt to bring daily news,” Obama said in a statement. Citing CPJ research on journalists killed on duty, his statement said, “Only a third of those deaths were linked to the dangers of covering war; the majority of victims were local

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Authorities hold Iraqi journalist without charge or due process.
- » Obama, Congress send encouraging messages on press freedom.

KEY STATISTIC

10 Days that U.S. immigration officials detained a VOA reporter during a visa dispute.

reporters covering topics such as crime, corruption, and national security in their home countries.” Obama also took part in an online interview in November with the Cuban blogger Yoani Sánchez. He told Sánchez, who has been harassed for her blogging that, “it is telling the Internet has provided you and other courageous Cuban bloggers with an outlet to express yourself so freely, and I applaud your collective efforts to empower fellow Cubans to express themselves through the use of technology.”

The Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act passed the House, and it came under consideration in the Senate. The act would compel the State Department to report annually to Congress on a full range of press freedom abuses, and to explain “what steps the government of each such country has taken to preserve the safety and independence of the media, and to ensure the prosecution of those individuals who attack or murder journalists.” CPJ sent a letter of support to the House sponsors of the bill, Reps. Adam Schiff and Mike Pence, and urged the Senate to pass the legislation.

The Free Flow of Information Act, which would help journalists under federal subpoena protect confidential sources, remained under consideration in Congress. The legislation cleared a key hurdle in December when the Senate Judiciary Committee approved a bill and sent it to the full chamber for a vote. The House had earlier passed its own version. CPJ was among many press freedom and news organizations supporting the legislation. The Global Online Freedom Act, which would make it a crime for U.S. firms to turn over customer information to governments of “Internet-restricting countries,” remained under consideration in the House of Representatives.

CPJ continued to serve as a member of the Global Network Initiative, founded in 2008 by a group of Internet companies, academics, investors, and human rights groups. The initiative established voluntary guidelines for Internet and telecommunications companies to protect free expression and privacy. Yahoo, Google, and Microsoft joined the initiative and agreed to follow its guidelines when restrictive governments seek to enlist them in acts of censorship or surveillance that violate international human rights standards. CPJ’s advocacy around the globe was recognized in October, when it received the Thomas J. Dodd Prize in International Justice and Human Rights. The prize was awarded for “significant effort to advance the cause of international justice and global human rights.”

State, county, and municipal authorities within the United States took actions against several journalists during the year. Diane Bukowski, a freelance reporter for *The Michigan Citizen*, was sentenced in June to one year of probation, 200 hours of community service, and \$4,200 in fines after being convicted on two felony counts of resisting, obstructing, opposing, and endangering two Michigan

state troopers at a crime scene. Bukowski was arrested in November 2008 while covering the aftermath of a state police chase that ended in fatalities. Many of Bukowski’s reports for the *Citizen*, a weekly focused on Detroit’s African-American community, had been critical of the Detroit Police Department and the Wayne County prosecutor. Both offices had pursued the criminal case against her. A Michigan state trooper acknowledged in court that he seized Bukowski’s camera during the arrest and erased two digital images.

A New York state legislator faced trial on allegations he attacked a photographer trying to take his picture in May. State Sen. Kevin Parker was getting out of a car near his parents’ home in Brooklyn when *New York Post* photographer William C. Lopez took his picture from the street, news reports said. The *Post* later published a story that said Parker, who had advocated foreclosure relief in the legislature, hadn’t made payments on a mortgage for a year. In Albany, State Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith removed Parker from leadership posts pending the outcome of the criminal case. Parker pleaded not guilty in July.

Pittsburgh police arrested at least two journalists who were covering protests during meetings by the Group of 20. Sadie Gurman of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* was held overnight before being released. The *Post-Gazette* quoted her as saying she was arrested “while truly trying to get out of the fray.” Melissa Hill, a reporter for *Twin Cities Indymedia*, a Minneapolis-based community news organization, was arrested and held for five hours. She said police had confiscated her video disc and broken her camera. Charges against Gurman were dropped, according to AP. Hill was found guilty of disorderly conduct and fined \$300, according to her blog post on *Twin Cities Indymedia*.

In October, federal authorities charged two Chicago men with plotting an attack against *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish newspaper that printed a series of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, according to news reports. The cartoons, first published in September 2005, sparked public protests in numerous countries after they were reproduced in other publications. Authorities said the plot was in its early stages.

VENEZUELA

AFTER SCORING A MAJOR VICTORY IN A FEBRUARY REFERENDUM that granted indefinite presidential re-election, President Hugo Chávez Frías and his government intensified their years-long crackdown on the private media. The government’s regulatory body took unprecedented steps to target critical broadcasters. Arbitrary decisions stripped private radio stations of their licenses, while a series of investigations threatened to shut down Venezuela’s

remaining critical television broadcaster, Globovisión. In the country's interior, an outspoken government critic was jailed, and an investigative reporter was slain in direct reprisal for his work.

Assailed by Chávez as an instrument of the oligarchy engaged in “media terrorism,” Globovisión was the target of a barrage of investigations. In September, the National Telecommunications Commission (CONATEL) opened an administrative probe after accusing the network of inciting rebellion for airing a viewer's text message calling for a coup. In July, CONATEL began an inquiry into allegations that Globovisión was airing messages that could create “anguish, anxiety, and fear.” The broadcaster had run an advertising campaign defending private property (at a time when the administration was nationalizing major industries, including telecommunications, electricity,

and some food production). Yet another inquiry was opened in May, on charges of “inciting panic and anxiety in the population,” after Globovisión reported on an earthquake that shook Caracas. During the broadcast, Globovisión Director Alberto Federico Ravell urged viewers to remain calm and accused authorities of failing to inform Venezuelans in a timely way, according to international news reports. The broadcaster, known for its strident antigovernment views, also had two pending investigations from 2008. A sanction in any one case could mean suspension of up to 72 hours; a second sanction could result in the revocation of the broadcaster's license.

The government threatened to take other steps. In June, just hours after Chávez warned Globovisión to cease its critical coverage or face closure, CONATEL requested that the Attorney General's office investigate whether the private broadcaster was criminally liable for violations of the telecommunications law. CPJ called it a “serious escalation” in tactics. No criminal investigation had been started by late year.

Globovisión was also victim of a violent attack in August, when a group of more than 30 armed individuals on motorcycles stormed its Caracas offices, set off tear gas canisters, and injured a local police officer and two employees. According to video footage later aired by the broadcaster, the assailants were members of the pro-Chávez political party Unión Patriótica Venezolana (UPV). Authorities

arrested UPV leader Lina Ron days later and charged her with “conspiring to commit a crime,” according to a statement from Minister of Interior and Justice Tarek El Aissami. Ron, released in October, was being tried in late year.

CONATEL used the regulation of broadcast licenses as pretext to silence independent and critical voices, pulling 32 privately owned radio stations and two TV stations off the public airwaves in early August. The broadcasters, CONATEL alleged, had failed to update their registration papers by a June deadline. According to the regulator, the stations were operating illegally because their licenses had been granted to “natural persons,” while the 2000 Law on Telecommunications required they be turned over to “legal persons.” The broadcasters appealed, and many presented evidence that they had filed documents to conform to the change. They remained off the air in late year.

The regulator had threatened earlier to revoke as many as 154 FM and 86 AM radio licenses. In a July letter, CPJ urged Minister of Public Works and Housing Diosdado Cabello to ensure that broadcast licensing be conducted in an unbiased and transparent manner.

The Chávez administration moved aggressively to curtail media freedom by introducing restrictive legislation. In July, Attorney General Luisa Ortega Díaz submitted a bill that would punish “press crimes” with prison terms. The goal, she said, was to confront “new forms of criminality created by the abusive exercise of freedom of information and opinion.” The initiative defined “press crimes” as actions that threaten the “social peace, the security, and independence of the nation, the stability of state institutions, mental health or public ethics, and actions that cause a state of impunity.” The measure vaguely said it would “prevent and punish actions or omissions displayed through the media that constitute a crime,” and would sanction “any person who releases false news in the media that causes serious public disorder, fear and anxiety among the population, or damages to state institutions.” After an international outcry, the bill was shelved by the National Assembly in August. (In January 2005, the National Assembly drastically increased criminal penalties for defamation while expanding the number of government officials protected by defamation provisions.)

The legislature approved an education bill with provisions prohibiting the distribution of material that could incite “hate, aggressiveness,” “unruliness,” or cause “terror in children.” After the bill's approval on August 13, a dozen journalists from the Caracas-based dailies *Ultimas Noticias*, *El Mundo*, and *Radio Líder*—owned by the private media conglomerate Cadena Capriles—staged a street protest against provisions they believed hindered free expression. That same afternoon they were struck and kicked by people the journalists identified as state employees who accused them of being “oligarchs” and “enemies of the people,” according to CPJ interviews. No one was seriously injured, but the episode

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Regulators strip licenses from critical broadcasters.
- » Government wages politicized investigations into Globovisión.

KEY STATISTIC

34

Private radio and television stations pulled from the air.

stayed in the spotlight when Chávez accused the Cadena Capriles reporters of provoking the attack. On August 15, authorities arrested Gabriel Uzcátegui, an employee of the state-owned broadcaster Ávila TV, in connection with the assault. The station denied involvement and questioned the veracity of the reported victims. Uzcátegui had not been charged by late year.

Journalists covering protests were systematically harassed and attacked. In January, protesters beat Rafael Garanton, a photographer for the daily *El Carabobeño*, in Carabobo province while covering a student protest over insecurity in the streets, according to the regional press freedom group Instituto Prensa y Sociedad. The journalist, whose camera was stolen by protesters, was taken to a hospital with minor injuries. Instituto Prensa y Sociedad documented other cases: José Gonzáles, a photographer for the daily *El Mundo Oriental*, was attacked in February by members of Venezuela's National Guard while photographing a public transportation drivers' protest in Anzoátegui. In April, a photojournalist for the Mérida-based daily *Pico Bolívar*, Héctor Molina, was threatened by hooded protesters when covering a student demonstration. In July, National Guard officers held Zulia López and Jesús Molina, a reporter and cameraman for the broadcaster RCTV Internacional, and Thais Jaimez, a reporter for the daily *Panorama*, after they attempted to cover a construction workers protest in Táchira province.

In July, a Táchira judge ordered the arrest of Gustavo Azócar, an outspoken critic of Chávez and correspondent for the national daily *El Universal*, TV host, and blogger. The judge found that Azócar, accused of financial crimes in a years-old case concerning an advertising contract, had violated a pretrial order not to comment publicly on the case. Azócar told CPJ he republished on his blog some pieces from other media outlets about the case, but had not written about the case himself. Azócar's lawyer and colleagues told CPJ the journalist was being punished for his critical commentary on local government officials.

Escalating overall violence raised alarm, especially in the country's interior. In January, unidentified individuals shot and injured Rafael Finol, the political editor for the daily *El Regional*, outside the paper's offices in southwestern Acarigua. The journalist told CPJ he believed the attack was in retaliation for the paper's political reporting, which supports the Chávez administration. Finol told CPJ that investigators believed hired assassins had been involved in the attack.

Also that month, an unidentified individual shot and killed Orel Sambrano, director of the local political weekly *ABC de la Semana* and Radio América, in the western city of Valencia. Sambrano, 62, was known locally for his investigations and commentary on local politics. Colleagues told CPJ that he had recently published a number of investigative pieces on the family of local businessman Walid

Makled. Press reports said that Sambrano had also named Rafael Segundo Pérez, a Carabobo police sergeant, as one of 13 local officers with ties to the Makled clan. On February 13, authorities arrested Pérez and accused him of working as a hired assassin and conspiring to commit a crime. Local news reports said authorities also issued an arrest warrant for Makled, whose family denied the accusations. Makled was believed to have left the country, news reports said. Deadly violence against the press is rare in Venezuela, according to CPJ research. Five journalists, including Sambrano, have been killed in relation to their work since 1992.

One of Venezuela's most strident critics, Rafael Poleo, editor and publisher of the daily *El Nuevo País* and the newsmagazine *Zeta*, fled the country in September after he was summoned by authorities in connection with a 2008 appearance on Globovisión, during which Poleo said Chávez "could end up like Mussolini." Poleo, who is living in exile in Miami, has said the government is looking to put him behind bars as part of its campaign against opponents, according to local news reports.

SNAPSHOTS

ATTACKS & DEVELOPMENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

BOLIVIA

- » An anonymous caller threatened Raphael Ramírez, editor of the national daily *La Prensa*, twice on the evening of April 12. The caller threatened to kill the editor if he “did not stop publishing lies,” the paper’s director, Carlos Morales, said. Morales told CPJ that he received three similar anonymous calls at home the following day warning that he would be killed if he did not stop reporting on a corruption scandal involving high-ranking government officials.
- » Andrés Rojas, news director for the El Alto-based television channel Canal de Televisión Virgen de Copacabana, announced on April 13 that, after several death threats against him and his family, he had decided to resign. Rojas told local reporters that he believed the threats were linked to the station’s critical coverage of local social organizations.
- » At 6 a.m. on July 26, two unidentified individuals attacked Marcelo Lobo, a cameraman for the La Paz-based television network Gigavisión, outside the broadcaster’s offices, local news reports said. The assailants hit Lobo on the head until he lost consciousness, and cut his cheek and part of his tongue, Gigavisión’s director, Alex Arias, told local reporters. According to the local daily *El Deber*, Lobo had reported on corruption and antigovernment protests in the city of Santa Cruz. Alberto Aracena, director of Bolivia’s Special Force for the Fight Against Crime, said the attack was premeditated and that investigators were looking into the journalist’s work as a possible motive.

CANADA

- » Three hooded assailants beat Jagdish Singh Grewal, editor and publisher of the *Punjabi Post*, in October as he was leaving the paper’s offices in Brampton, Ontario, news reports said. Grewal said the assailants smashed a window in his van, dragging him out into the parking lot. He said one assailant put a gun to his forehead, but fled with the other two men when another *Punjabi Post* employee appeared on the scene, according to local news reports. The Peel Regional Police were looking into Grewal’s journalism as the main motive for the attack, the daily *Globe and Mail* reported. Grewal said the paper had recently reported on opiate use among the local Punjabi community, and had been highly critical

of extremist groups seeking a separate Sikh state in India.

- » Canadian authorities detained and questioned Amy Goodman, host of the syndicated radio and television program “Democracy Now!” as she tried to cross the border south of Vancouver for a book promotion in November. After 90 minutes, authorities issued her a restricted visa requiring her to leave the country within 48 hours. Goodman said authorities wanted to know whether she would be discussing the 2010 Olympics to be held in and around Vancouver. The Canadian Border Services Agency would not discuss details of the incident.

COSTA RICA

- » Dozens of journalists attempted to photograph the wedding of Brazilian supermodel Giselle Bündchen and U.S. football player Tom Brady on April 4 in the western city of Santa Teresa de Cóbano. According to news reports, Yuri Cortez, a Salvadoran photographer for Agence France-Presse, was approached by a man claiming to be a bodyguard for the supermodel who tried to grab Cortez’s camera. Cortez and Rolando Aviles, a photographer for the Costa Rican daily *Al Día*, got into their vehicle and were followed by at least one man who fired a gunshot, shattering the car’s rear window, AFP said.

EL SALVADOR

- » The bullet-ridden body of veteran French filmmaker and photojournalist Christian Gregorio Poveda Ruiz, 52, was found on September 2 on an isolated road in the town of Tonacatepeque, north of San Salvador, according to news reports. The journalist had worked throughout 2008 on a documentary on one of the country’s most violent gangs, Mara 18, which was scheduled for wide release that month. Poveda, who lived with the gang for months, had received death threats from some of its members. Police arrested five alleged members of Mara 18 and a police agent on September 8, and charged them with aggravated murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and illicit association, the Attorney General’s office said.

GUATEMALA

- » Rolando Santiz, a reporter for the national television station Telecentro 13, was killed and Antonio de León, a station cameraman, was injured when two men on a motorcycle fired several shots at them in Guatemala City on April 1, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Santiz had worked as a

reporter for more than 30 years and was well-known in Guatemala. He told colleagues that he had received death threats, but it was not clear whether they were linked to a specific story. Local authorities said they were investigating the attack but did not disclose information about the possible motive or suspects. De León was hospitalized with head, jaw, and chest wounds.

- » An unidentified gunman killed television reporter Marco Antonio Estrada on June 6 in the eastern city of Chiquimula, 140 miles (225 kilometers) east of Guatemala City, according to local news reports and CPJ interviews. Estrada had worked for more than 20 years as a journalist, local reporters told CPJ. He covered general news, including organized crime and drug trafficking, for the national television station Tele Diario. Local authorities said they were looking into Estrada's work as a possible motive, colleagues told CPJ.

PANAMA

- » A judge in February sentenced journalist Jean Marcel Chéry to two years in prison on trespassing charges. The verdict followed a series of complaints from Supreme Court Justice Winston Spadafora. Chéry said he had a guard's permission to enter Spadafora's property to report a 2001 story saying that the official had used public funds to build a nearby road. Chéry was free on appeal.

PERU

- » The Peruvian Supreme Court convicted former President Alberto Fujimori of human rights crimes on April 7. Among other crimes, Fujimori was convicted of masterminding the 1992 kidnapping of prominent journalist Gustavo Gorriti, a 1998 recipient of CPJ's International Press Freedom Award. The former president was sentenced to 25 years in prison. He was sentenced again, in September, to six years in prison for secretly wiretapping politicians, journalists, and businessmen, along with bribing congressmen and buying off a television station and a newspaper editorial board to back his 2000 re-election campaign.

URUGUAY

- » On June 10, the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies, the lower chamber of parliament, passed a measure repealing criminal defamation on issues of public interest involving officials, according to local news reports. The bill, approved by the Senate in December 2008, was signed into law by President Tabaré Vázquez.



ASIA

ANALYSIS

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From censorship to abduction, the news media face enormous challenges in covering the multifaceted conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea

PHOTOS

Section break: Reuters/Mian Khursheed—*Camera operators film ammunition seized from militants in Pakistan's tribal areas.* Analysis: AFP/Pedro Ugarte—*An Afghan police officer aims a weapon at two photographers covering pre-election violence in Kabul.*

AS FIGHTING SURGES, SO DOES DANGER TO PRESS

BY BOB DIETZ

AS THE UNITED STATES REDEPLOYS FORCES TO AFGHANISTAN, and the Pakistani military moves into the country's tribal areas, the media face enormous challenges in covering a multifaceted conflict straddling two volatile countries. Pakistani reporters cannot move freely in areas controlled by militants. International reporters in Afghanistan, at risk from kidnappers and suicide bombers, encounter daunting security challenges. And front-line reporters in both countries face pressure from all sides.

In Pakistan, the dangers have been borne largely by local reporters, many of whom were uprooted from their homes during an escalation in fighting in the North West Frontier Province in mid-year. Three local journalists and one foreign reporter, an Afghan, were killed during the year. Journalists faced bombings, attacks, and threats from the Taliban and other militants, but noted that government and military officials had also exerted political pressure and, at times, a careless disregard for their welfare.

In Afghanistan, where international news media coverage intensified during the year, heightened dangers came in good part from roadside bombs and abductions. One local journalist, Sultan Mohammed Munadi, was killed in 2009, during a British military effort to rescue his fellow captive, *New York Times* reporter and



Irish-British national Stephen Farrell. A Canadian reporter, Michelle Lang, embedded with troops from that country, was killed by a roadside bomb near Kandahar.

Conditions did not deteriorate to the same levels faced by the press in Iraq, where 140 journalists and 51 media support workers were killed and dozens more were abducted, most of them between 2003 and the end of 2008. Yet some parallels exist. As in Iraq, conflict pitted a range of insurgent and criminal groups against well-equipped military forces and weak central governments. Local journalists in Pakistan and Afghanistan provided much of the front-line coverage and were often exposed to great risk, a situation that existed in Iraq.

International news organizations took heightened precautions in the two countries but had not yet established the sort of armed, fortified compounds that housed their operations in Baghdad. International news coverage, particularly in Afghanistan, increased along with the level of fighting. U.S.-based news outlets devoted greater staffing, more airtime, and more print space to the conflict in Afghanistan, making it, by late year, the top news story in the United States for the first time as judged by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism.

As in Iraq, increasing risk brought with it greater limitations on access. While Pakistani reporters could embed with the nation's military to cover the fighting, military rules prevented them from reporting everything they saw. While journalists in Afghanistan could still move relatively freely in Kabul, reporting trips to places such as Kandahar and Kunduz now had to be weighed against the increasing risks there.

The Pakistani government launched two major military offensives in 2009, one into the Swat Valley and surrounding areas beginning in April, and then a push into the heart of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in October, aimed at the core of the Taliban's Pakistan-based leadership. In the provincial capital of Peshawar in the midst of the conflict zones, many local reporters from the surrounding towns under attack told CPJ that both the militants and the military had made it more difficult than ever to report independently.

During the Swat Valley offensive, as many as 260 local reporters wound up joining the general population in fleeing the all-out attacks by the Pakistani military, according to the Khyber Union of Journalists. Some stayed behind to take their chances, but their coverage was severely limited by the threat of retaliation.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS OUTLETS TAKE HEIGHTENED PRECAUTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN.

Sher Khan Afridi, president of the Khyber Union of Journalists, said the homes of at least six journalists had been targeted and destroyed by militants angered by news coverage.

One home belonged to Rahman Bunaree, a popular reporter for Khyber TV, a national, privately owned broadcaster, and the U.S. government-funded Voice of America's Deewa service, which targets the Pashto-speaking audience in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border area. Militants told Bunaree's family they were retaliating for his reporting. "They had come to destroy our house, and they told us so. They told my father, 'We have orders to blow up the house because of your son's criticism of the Taliban,'" Bunaree told CPJ. In the face of continuing threats he fled the country to live in the United States.

Because of the dangers faced by local reporters, much of the coverage was provided by Pakistani journalists from outside the region who embedded with the military. Shamsul Islam Naz, secretary-general of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, told CPJ that the military routinely suppressed stories about the impact of the fighting on the local populace. Other journalists interviewed by CPJ also noted the military's tight restrictions on embedded reporting.

Muhammad Arshad Sharif, a correspondent for Dawn TV News who embedded with the military during the Swat offensive, acknowledged that some events were not disclosed in news reports from embedded reporters. "For example," he said, "you can't show the damage and dead bodies if it's bad for the military.

"But at least you're part of history as it is happening, even if you can't tell the whole story," added Sharif, who offered hope that "we can show all our footage later, to show the violation of human rights of war." For Sharif, embedding was a necessary tactic in a situation that offered few attractive options. "Either you cover it from the side of the militants or go over and cover it from the side of the government. Cover it independently and your life is at risk. Your life can be taken away because you could be a target of either of the two sides," Sharif said.

Between 2001 and 2009, at least 22 journalists were killed in connection to their work in Pakistan, all but two of them local reporters and photographers.

**THE PAKISTANI MILITARY
ALLOWS REPORTERS TO EMBED
BUT CENSORS THE COVERAGE.** Three of the four deaths in 2009 came at the hands of militants, but the Pakistani army also came under criticism for recklessly endangering reporters. In June, troops manning a checkpoint in Malakand fired on AVT Khyber cameraman Malik Imran and the crew's driver. The journalists said their car was hit after it had cleared the checkpoint. The army never issued a statement or clarification, but an angered Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists did, saying that "such incidents have become the order of the day in conflict areas." When CPJ met with reporters in

July, they complained of persistent harassment from the military once the regular army launched operations within the North West Frontier Province.

Journalists in foreign news bureaus said they were taking more precautions. “We are certainly more security conscious than ever,” said Carol Grisanti, lead

**A U.S. PRODUCER SAYS SHE RELIES
ON HER LOCAL CREW TO ‘GO IT
ALONE’ IN CERTAIN AREAS.**

producer in Islamabad for the U.S. television network NBC. “New York has to sign off on any trips outside of Islamabad and weigh the safety risks be-

fore going to cover the story.” As of late year, Grisanti said, NBC had not seen the need to hire a private security firm as many organizations did in Iraq.

“We definitely rely more on our local crew to go it alone inside the North West Frontier Province,” said Grisanti, who said she and other NBC staffers had once accompanied local reporters on such trips. With NBC’s foreign desk in New York worried about the local staff’s safety, she said, “I need to run all trips by them for safety concerns and then get their approval.”

Those concerns were underscored in December when a suicide bomber set off an explosive device as he tried to enter the grounds of the Peshawar Press Club. Four people were killed—including a police constable who had stopped the bomber at the gate—while 26 were injured. About 30 journalists were inside the club for a press conference.

Gen. David Petraeus, commander of U.S. Central Command, reported in September a 60 percent increase in violence in Afghanistan over the prior year, although he told the Infantry Warfighting Conference that it was “a heck of a lot less than the height of violence in Iraq.” Attacks in the capital, Kabul, were rare before 2008, but since that time a dozen major assaults were reported in the city, including attacks by a range of militant groups on the German Embassy, the headquarters for the NATO-led force, the Information Ministry and the Justice Ministry buildings, as well as other targets near the U.S. Embassy, presidential palace, and airport.

In late year, more than 71,000 NATO troops making up the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) were going up against a wide array of militant groups including hard-line Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters, criminal gangs, and drug traffickers, all operating in a country without a strong central government—in many ways a scenario reminiscent of Iraq.

Robert Reid, a veteran Associated Press journalist who has served as bureau chief in Kabul and Baghdad, told CPJ in October that “we don’t hear the hourly explosions or the heavy nighttime bursts of gunfire that were fixtures of life in Bagh-

dad for years. Nor do we have to contend with the hard divisions in the city that we used to face in Beirut in the 1980s.” The capital was getting tougher, he said, but “Westerners can still move about in most of Kabul as long as they maintain a situational awareness and avoid certain areas of the city, especially at night.”

Coverage decisions outside the capital, however, were riskier. “There are wide areas of the country that are no-go areas. I wouldn’t send a Westerner by car to Kandahar, like we were able to do in 2002, nor to Kunduz, Kunar, Paktia, and Paktika. We don’t make any trips outside of Kabul without checking first with the Afghan police, the U.N., ISAF, and some of the security companies. All of that does require greater use of Afghan journalists than a few years ago,” Reid said.

In interviews with journalists stationed in other foreign news bureaus in Kabul, it was clear that all had taken heightened security precautions, though not to the same extent as was done in Iraq. One U.S. journalist, who did not want to be named because the person did not want to appear critical of an employer, said Kabul would not resemble Baghdad in part because news budgets were tight. “Of course we’re more security conscious, we have to be,” the journalist said. “But we’re also under pressure to keep costs down. If things get worse, I don’t know what the plan will be: More security, or less coverage? Maybe both?”

**ABDUCTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN
TARGET WESTERN JOURNALISTS BUT
ENDANGER LOCAL REPORTERS, TOO.**

International journalists reflect an unusually high proportion of media fatalities in Afghanistan, according to CPJ research. Eleven of the 17 journalists killed in Afghanistan between 2001 and 2009 were foreign reporters and photographers. That’s far above the worldwide proportion: CPJ data show that about 15 percent of journalists killed in any given country are international reporters. Casualties from militants’ increasing use of roadside bombs underlined the risk. The death of the Canadian journalist Lang in late December followed several other cases in which roadside bombs injured media workers. CBS reporter Cami McCormick was wounded while embedded with U.S. troops in August; a similar strike, also in August, injured Associated Press cameraman Emilio Morenatti and photographer Andi Jatmiko.

A string of abductions also seemed to highlight the risk to Western reporters. The captives included *La Repubblica*’s Daniele Mastrogiacomo in 2007; the CBC’s Mellissa Fung, Dutch writer Joanie de Rijke, British journalist Sean Langan, and *New York Times* reporter David Rohde in 2008; and the *Times*’ Farrell and two unidentified French TV journalists in 2009. All but the French reporters escaped or gained their release, but observers also saw in these cases the grave risks to local reporters: Mastrogiacomo’s fixer, local reporter Ajmal Naqshbandi, and driver,

Sayed Agha, were beheaded by their Taliban captors. Farrell's reporting companion, Munadi, was killed during the British military rescue under circumstances that were not explained. CPJ called on British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to investigate whether Munadi's rescue was a central objective of the mission, and whether troops had sufficient information to identify him as a captive.

In the southern province of Kandahar, several local journalists told CPJ they had received repeated threats from officials connected with the provincial council headed by Ahmed Wali Karzai, brother and election campaign manager of President Hamid Karzai. News outlets that carried allegations of Ahmed Wali Karzai's involvement in drug smuggling and campaign corruption were among those targeted, local journalists said. Mirwais Afghan, a former BBC and Reuters journalist, told CPJ he had been forced to flee after receiving direct threats from high-ranking officials.

Jahid Mohseni, chief executive of the Moby Group, which runs an array of media operations, said reporters who pursued hard-nosed local stories about corruption were very vulnerable. "The only things protecting them are their fame and their name in terms of the general public," Mohseni told CPJ. Their safety, he said, had become a constantly growing concern for management.

Moby's flagship operation is Tolo TV, which operates in Kabul out of a compound surrounded by walls topped with barbed wire and overseen by armed security guards. With car bombs a growing reality in the city, only the company's vehicles are permitted within the station's perimeter—visitors must walk the final block to the bunkered guard house where their IDs are checked. But the station cannot provide around-the-clock security for its reporters. "It's a tough environment. There are personal security issues—all the reporters we have live on their own," Mohseni told CPJ.

Another top Afghan journalist, Danish Karokhel, director and editor-in-chief of Pajhwok Afghan News, said security had deteriorated since the beginning of 2008. He noted the station had lost two reporters in two years: Abdul Samad Rohani, who died in 2008, and Janullah Hashimzada, killed across the border in Pakistan in 2009. Some of his reporters had resigned in the face of threats, and Pajhwok started shifting reporters among bureaus whenever threats against any one of them got serious. The agency had tried to support a small insurance fund, while still spending money on flak jackets and other protective equipment.

The matter is made worse for journalists because "the government does not respect the rule of law and freedom of speech," said Karokhel, a 2008 CPJ Inter-

national Press Freedom Awardee. The government's attitude toward media was clear during the run-up to August's presidential elections, considered corrupt by the United Nations, when security forces obstructed, assaulted, and detained Afghan and foreign journalists around the country. They were enforcing an official gag order on news of violent incidents during the election. A presidential spokesman told the press that information about attacks would discourage voter turnout.

Open-ended detentions of local journalists by U.S. forces have also raised concern, although the practice has been far less prevalent in Afghanistan than it had been in Iraq. CPJ research shows dozens of local journalists were detained by U.S. troops in Iraq without charge. In at least 13 cases, journalists were held for prolonged periods in Iraq (one of which remained pending in late 2009). No

*THROUGH TRAINING, NEWS OUTLETS
AND GOVERNMENTS CAN BETTER
PROTECT REPORTERS IN THE FIELD.*

charges have been substantiated in any of the cases.

In Afghanistan, there have been several cases of short-term detentions since the U.S.-led retaliation against Al-Qaeda after the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in New York and Washington. But many Afghan journalists saw the 11-month jailing of CBC journalist Jawed Ahmad in 2007 and 2008 as an example of what can happen to a local journalist who winds up under suspicion of Western forces. Ahmad was eventually released without charge, only to be shot to death in Kandahar in March 2009 under unclear circumstances.

With an increase of 30,000 U.S. troops and possible other troop increases in Afghanistan, local journalists told CPJ they were concerned about security conditions. Though the U.S. military does not want to be seen as an occupying force, one Afghan journalist with a major Western news agency was skeptical of its presence. Even though his international media employer is well-known to the military, "I stay away from any of the ISAF troops. It is just too dangerous to be around them if you are not embedded with them—if they don't know who you are," he told CPJ. He asked not to be identified because his employer does not allow him to speak publicly about his work.

Covering war is a dangerous occupation and reporters usually understand the risk. Still, media companies and governments can take steps to reduce the danger, if only slightly. Safety training and protective gear for local journalists should be supplied by their employers. Some of those journalists lucky enough to work for large organizations do get such equipment, but the vast majority of local reporters and photographers must fend for themselves.

There is another approach to dealing with the problem. The militaries involved in the conflicts—and there are at least 44 if you include the ISAF’s 42 constituent forces, along with Afghan and Pakistani forces—can begin by including in their preparations specific rules on how troops should conduct themselves when they encounter journalists in the field.

Such training does make a difference. As an example, revised rules for U.S. troops staffing checkpoints in Iraq reduced the number of cases in which innocent people were fired on. U.S. commanders, who wield great influence within the ISAF, should consult with local journalists’ organizations to develop guidelines for new rules of conduct for the interaction between troops and journalists. Those rules should be included in the next edition of the U.S. military’s Counterinsurgency Field Manual and put into practice by all ISAF forces.

Pakistani authorities should ease the restrictions placed on reporters embedded with the military. Suppressing footage or reporting, even if they put the military in a negative light, is counterproductive. Clear, written rules of reporting, agreed upon by both sides, can both protect military security and ensure fair and thorough news coverage. The Pakistani military, while making some strides toward better media relations, has remained less accessible than it should be. In Peshawar, non-embedded journalists told CPJ they had little or no access to military commanders. Taliban militants, on the other hand, maintained an around-the-clock network of spokesmen.

From the guerrilla wars of past decades to the fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan, counterinsurgency conflict has become the most common form of warfare. The mistakes made in the past—particularly in Iraq, where so many journalists died or were jailed without basis—do not have to be repeated in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Violence is escalating throughout the theater, but there are steps that can be taken to minimize the threat to the men and women reporting from this deadly arena.

Bob Dietz is CPJ’s Asia program coordinator. He reported from Peshawar, Islamabad, and Kabul during 2009.

AFGHANISTAN

DEEPENING VIOLENCE, FLAWED ELECTIONS, RAMPANT CORRUPTION, and faltering development provided plenty of news to cover, but the deteriorating national conditions also raised dangers for local and foreign journalists working in Afghanistan. Roadside bombs claimed the life of a Canadian reporter and injured several other international journalists. A series of kidnappings mainly targeted international reporters, but one captive Afghan journalist was killed during a British military mission that succeeded in rescuing his British-Irish colleague.

Insurgent groups sought to disrupt the August 20 presidential elections with an array of bombings and other attacks, prompting the government to issue a directive urging news media not to report on Election Day violence. Officials followed up with phone calls seeking to discourage such reporting, saying the coverage would deter turnout. Some Afghan news media toned down coverage in response, journalists told CPJ, but most reported events as they ordinarily would. “Our local members in all 34 provinces all rejected the government’s request, and we issued a statement and told members to continue reporting all day the same way they have in the past,” Rahimullah Samander, head of the Afghan Independent Journalists Association, told CPJ. International journalists reported obstruction by police seeking to enforce the directive. P.J. Tobia, a correspondent for *The Christian Science Monitor*, reported that police were “ripping video and still cameras off the shoulders of photographers and television reporters” seeking to cover the aftermath of a Kabul firefight. At least three international journalists and several local journalists were briefly detained in various parts of the country on Election Day.

Reports of fraud emerged as quickly as tallies showing President Hamid

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government tries to curb reporting on Election Day violence.
- » Abductions target foreign reporters, endangering local journalists, too.

KEY STATISTIC

20 Years that Parwez Kambakhsh would have spent in jail on an unjust charge. He was freed in August.

Country summaries in this chapter were researched and written by CPJ Asia Program Coordinator **Bob Dietz**, Research Associate **Madeline Earp**, and Senior Southeast Asia Representative **Shawn W. Crispin**.

Karzai ahead. The United Nations, which was charged with overseeing the vote, found the official counts in some provinces exceeded the estimated number of voters by more than 100,000. U.N. officials eventually said that nearly a third of the ballots for the incumbent were fraudulent and should be thrown out, leaving Karzai with less than 50 percent of the vote. U.S. and international pressure persuaded Karzai to agree to a runoff, but chief presidential rival Abdullah Abdullah withdrew from the race on November 1, saying the voting would still be rigged. Barely an hour after the Afghan Independent Election Commission announced on November 2 that Karzai had won by default, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul issued a statement congratulating him and calling the election “historic.” Though the vote was marred by a lack of security, low turnout, fraud, and voter intimidation, many other countries accepted the result as well. During a pre-election trip to Kabul in July, CPJ was told by diplomats and international aid agencies of the importance of stability and continuity before and after the voting, and they warned of a dangerous “political vacuum” if the election were inconclusive.

The problem-plagued election deepened the risk in places such as Kandahar. The city and the surrounding areas have long been a focal point of military conflict between NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Taliban groups, but journalists said the southern province became even more dangerous as the election arrived. “Besides the daily threat of being caught up in an attack by insurgent groups, several local journalists tell CPJ they fear beatings, detentions, or worse in retribution for their reporting,” Executive Director Joel Simon wrote in a letter to Karzai in September. CPJ’s letter noted that local reporters were also concerned about threats from officials connected with the provincial council, headed by the president’s brother and campaign manager, Ahmed Wali Karzai. News outlets that carried allegations of Ahmed Wali Karzai’s involvement in drug smuggling and campaign corruption were among those targeted.

With violence continuing, the United States and some of the 41 other countries that make up the ISAF increased troop commitments in late year. In November, a week after five U.N. staff members were killed by militants who targeted their Kabul housing compound, the United Nations evacuated about 600 of its 1,100 international staff, at least initially calling it a temporary move.

Abductions remained a pernicious problem, raising not only security issues but difficult questions about how best to secure the freedom of captives and how to report the stories. Since 2007, at least 15 journalists were reported abducted by the Taliban and other militant or criminal groups. Although international journalists appeared to be targeted, local reporters—often serving as guides, interpreters, and fixers for their international counterparts—were also snatched and placed at risk. Three cases offer different insight into the issue.

In November, in one of the most recent abductions, Norwegian freelance television producer Paal Refsdal and his translator, Seraj-u-den Ahmadzai, were released from captivity in Kunar province, near the Pakistan border. Their freedom came after quiet negotiations between the Norwegian Embassy and a Taliban group holding them, with the cooperation of the Afghan government.

The September kidnapping of *New York Times* reporters Stephen Farrell and Sultan Mohammed Munadi ended much differently. Four days after the two were taken by Taliban forces south of Kunduz, British commandos rescued Farrell, a British-Irish national, but did not save Munadi, who was killed during the mission under circumstances that were not explained. The *Times* told CPJ it had expressed reservations about the mission beforehand to British officials. In November, CPJ wrote to British Prime Minister Gordon Brown urging his government to investigate whether organizers of the mission had identified Munadi’s rescue as a central objective and whether troops had sufficient information to identify him as a captive. Brown’s office said he had referred the matter to the Defense Ministry, which did not immediately respond to CPJ. The death of Munadi, a respected local reporter, resonated deeply in the Afghan press corps. Local journalists formed the ad hoc Munadi Group, which called on the Afghan government, NATO, the United Nations, and the British government to explain how and why Munadi had been killed.

David Rohde, a prominent *New York Times* reporter on leave to write a book, and his local colleague, Tahir Ludin, managed to escape their Taliban captors in June 2009, after seven months in captivity. The two were abducted in November 2008 while on their way to interview a Taliban commander in Logar province, south of Kabul, and were taken to Pakistan’s North Waziristan, near the border with Afghanistan. During the time Ludin and Rohde were held, *The New York Times* suppressed reporting of the abduction. The paper’s staffers in New York contacted editors and bloggers to say that a media blackout was in the men’s best interests. CPJ and others honored the request, which the paper said had come from Rohde’s family. In the aftermath, the case stirred debate in the United States over the ethics of withholding the news story from the public.

Danish Karokhel, who runs the Pajhwok Afghan News agency, said he faces such difficult decisions regularly. He told CPJ in Kabul that he refrains from covering many stories for fear of angering powerful figures and, thus, endangering his reporters. But then, he said, he has to deal with complaints from local people who want their story told and want to know why it is not being reported. “As a reporter in this country, what are we supposed to cover? Every story has to anger someone; that’s what makes it news,” said Karokhel, a 2008 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee.

The Afghan press corps covered violence and corruption forcefully, although political influence on news outlets was pervasive. Many media outlets are tied to influential political figures and tribal leaders, and the government often allocates broadcast licenses to local figures to curry political favor. Reporting on the drug trade was especially hazardous. The 2008 murder of Abdul Samad Rohani, a BBC and Pajhwok Afghan News reporter who had covered drug trafficking in Helmand province, remained unsolved.

In late December, a reporter embedded with Canadian troops was killed along with four soldiers while traveling in a military convoy. Michelle Lang, who was working for the *Calgary Herald* and Canwest News Service, was covering the activities of a reconstruction team when its vehicle hit a roadside bomb just south of Kandahar.

The year was marked by one positive note. Parwez Kambakhsh, a 24-year-old Afghan journalist and student unjustly convicted of blasphemy, was freed from Kabul Detention Center in August, apparently on a presidential pardon. Kambakhsh had been arrested in October 2007 and accused of distributing an Internet article about women's rights in Islam. He was initially sentenced to death during a brief, closed-door proceeding at which he was denied legal representation. The death sentence was later reduced to a 20-year prison term.

CPJ had waged a vigorous international campaign on behalf of Kambakhsh, and had visited the young reporter in jail in July. The case was politically sensitive for Karzai, who had to strike a balance between international pressure and the expectations of the country's conservative religious leadership. Yaqub Ibrahim, the journalist's brother and a reporter himself, thanked CPJ for its advocacy in the case and said the release was "a victory for freedom of speech in Afghanistan." Wary of future reprisals, Kambakhsh and his brother left Afghanistan for undisclosed locations.

BURMA

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, BURMA'S RULING JUNTA EMPHASIZED ITS PLANS to move toward multiparty democracy after decades of military rule, a long-promised transition that dissidents and others viewed as a sham to further consolidate the military's power. As the country geared up for general elections in 2010—the first since the military annulled the 1990 elections, which were won overwhelmingly by the political opposition—authorities maintained strict censorship over the local news media and held at least nine journalists behind bars.

The military regime came under heavy international pressure, particularly

from the United States and the European Union, to release the estimated 2,100 political prisoners it held in detention, including Aung San Suu Kyi, party leader of the National League for Democracy. As part of a mass amnesty of 7,114 prisoners on September 18, three journalists were released among an estimated 120 political detainees.

Among those freed was Eine Khine Oo, a reporter with the *Ecovision* weekly journal who was sentenced to two years in prison in 2008 for reporting on a demonstration of Cyclone Nargis victims seeking aid in front of a U.N. office in Rangoon. *Weekly Eleven* reporter Kyaw Kyaw Thant, who was sentenced to seven years on antistate charges for covering the same demonstration, was also released. Thet Zin, editor of the *Myanmar Nation* weekly news journal, was freed in the amnesty after being sentenced in 2008 to seven years in prison on illegal printing charges. At the time of

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Some political prisoners freed, but nine journalists still held.
- » Government censors all print publications, controls broadcasters.

KEY STATISTIC

1st Ranking on CPJ's Worst Countries to Be a Blogger.

Zin's arrest, police seized video footage of Buddhist monk-led protests and a critical report written by U.N. Special Rapporteur Paulo Sergio Pinheiro from the journal's offices.

The military government's revolving prison door opened to at least three other journalists, all of whom were being held without publicly disclosed charges in late year. Police and military intelligence officials arrested Thant Zin Soe, an editor and translator for the journal *Foreign Affairs*, at his Rangoon home in October, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom advocacy group. Paing Soe Oo, a freelance online commentator writing under the name Jay Paing, was arrested the same month in Rangoon. The media association said it believed he was suspected of providing information to foreign news and nongovernmental organizations. A video journalist known as "T," who worked undercover for the Oslo-based Democratic Voice of Burma, was arrested in mid-year. The Rory Peck Trust announced "T's" detention in November 18 as it honored him and an unnamed colleague for their work on a documentary, "Orphans of the Burmese Cyclone," according to international news reports.

Exile-run media groups based outside the country told CPJ that some of their undercover stringers were still being held in detention after a crackdown on political dissent in the wake of 2007 antigovernment street protests. They remained anonymous out of fear the authorities would extend their prison sentences if they

discovered the detainees had sent news, images, or videos of the protests over the Internet to overseas news organizations critical of the regime.

In April, CPJ ranked Burma as the worst place in the world to be a blogger because of the extreme measures the government had implemented to curb Internet freedom. Private Internet penetration is very small—only about 1 percent, according to the Internet research group OpenNet Initiative—so most citizens access the Internet in cybercafés. Authorities heavily regulate those cafés, requiring them, for example, to enforce censorship rules. The government, which shut down the Internet altogether during a popular uprising in 2007, has the capability to monitor e-mail and other communication and to block users from viewing Web sites of political opposition groups, according to OpenNet.

CPJ's assessment was also motivated by the continued detention of bloggers Nay Phone Latt, who was sentenced in 2008 to 20 and a half years on violations of the Electronic and Video acts, and Maung Thura, who was initially sentenced to 59 years in part for communicating with exiled dissidents and giving interviews to foreign media.

Maung Thura, who maintained a blog known as *Zarganar-window*, which loosely translates as “Tweezer’s Outlook,” had made comments to the BBC critical of the government’s initial response to Cyclone Nargis. In January, family members were denied visitation rights after they had traveled more than 560 miles (900 kilometers) from Rangoon to Myitk Yina Prison in Kachin state. In early 2009, a Rangoon divisional court cut eight and a half years from Nay Phone Latt’s sentence and 24 years from Maung Thura’s term. The actions came just weeks before a U.N. human rights official was scheduled to visit the country.

Burma remained one of the most oppressive places in the world to be a print journalist. The Ministry of Information’s Press Scrutiny and Registration Board (PSRB) continued to review all articles before publication and extended its reach to Web-based formats. The time-consuming and often arbitrary process forced nearly all privately held news publications in Burma to publish on either a weekly or monthly basis.

Burmese journalists who met with CPJ in 2009 said there were more than 50 general newsweeklies and as many as 130 others covering sports and other innocuous topics. There were no independently run broadcast operations in the country, but journalists estimated that a large majority of the population openly listened to broadcasts from the BBC and the U.S. government-funded Voice of America.

The visiting journalists said editors used two different pencils to edit copy: Blue pencils were used for line edits, while red pencils indicated that phrases or topics were forbidden by the government’s censorship board. That censorship was

strictly enforced for news stories that referred to the first anniversary of Cyclone Nargis, which left 140,000 dead or missing and affected an estimated 2.4 million Burmese citizens, according to U.N. estimates. The exile-run Mizzima news agency quoted Burmese editors and journalists as saying that the PSRB had rejected materials for publication that recounted the severity of the storm’s destruction or showed victims still suffering from the storm’s impact.

“We cannot be critical of the government’s efforts on recovery,” said the editor of one weekly journal who was quoted in a Mizzima news report. “Our stories that say that victims are still suffering are rejected. We must publish only optimistic reports.” The state-run media simultaneously ran several news stories that portrayed positively the government-led rehabilitation work in cyclone-hit regions.

On August 21, the PSRB formally banned and withdrew the publishing license for the weekly news journal *Phoenix* over violations of censorship rules and regulations, according to a Mizzima report. *Phoenix*’s publisher, known as Maj. Mar-J, had earlier written satirical articles about the regime’s radical decision to move the national capital from Rangoon to Naypyitaw, a newly built and highly fortified center just outside the central town of Pyinmana.

Foreign reporters were also targeted for harassment. On May 7, the government expelled two U.S. journalists, Jerry Redfern and Karen Coates, who were in the country to teach a PSRB-approved course on feature writing and photography. They were arrested without explanation in the central city of Mandalay, transported under guard on an overnight train to Rangoon, and deported without charge to Thailand. “They asked us nothing, told us nothing, searched nothing, took nothing,” the two said in a prepared statement released after landing in Bangkok.

The regime also threatened those who published critical articles in prominent foreign news publications. On September 9, U Win Tin, former journalist and current National League for Democracy co-leader, wrote an op-ed in *The Washington Post* titled “An Election the Burmese People Don’t Need,” which openly criticized the military government’s plan to hold voting before achieving national reconciliation with the political opposition and while detaining more than 2,000 political prisoners.

U Win Tin was detained and interrogated on September 12 but released without charge the same day. A former editor-in-chief of the *Hanthawati* daily newspaper, he served 19 years of a 20-year prison sentence on various charges, including inciting treason against the state for writing and distributing pamphlets during antigovernment uprisings in 1988 that were crushed by the military. He was released in November 2008 after suffering two heart attacks in prison. International advocacy groups campaigned for years for his release.

CHINA

WHILE CHINA'S RULING COMMUNIST PARTY CELEBRATED 60 YEARS in power in 2009, its critics commemorated antigovernment movements in Tibet in 1949 and Tiananmen Square in 1989. Government agencies used a security apparatus strengthened for the 2008 Olympics to restrict dissenting voices during all three landmark anniversaries.

Foreign journalists were the main beneficiaries of media reforms undertaken in the run-up to the Olympics. Yet compliance with liberalized rules allowing international journalists to travel and conduct interviews without government permission remained patchy in early 2009. In March, international journalists were refused access to the Tibetan Autonomous Region and expelled from Tibetan areas of western China to prevent reporting on the first anniversary of rioting between minority Tibetans and Han Chinese, which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising. Police harassed reporters in Sichuan one year after the May 2008 earthquake. On June 4, 20 years after troops fired on antigovernment protesters in Beijing, journalists with the BBC and CNN reporting from the focal point of the student-led unrest, Tiananmen Square, found police obstructing their camera lenses with open umbrellas.

Mid-year brought apparent changes in government tactics. Rumors of strife between Han Chinese and minority Uighur workers at a factory in southern Guangzhou province sparked riots in the far-western Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region on July 5. This time, information authorities welcomed international correspondents to the regional capital, Urumqi, to cover the disturbance. The state-run news agency, Xinhua, which notoriously excludes antigovernment movements from coverage, reported a death toll of nearly 200. Foreign news outlets praised the unusual openness. Out of the spotlight, however, restrictions continued. The Guangzhou factory, site of the original tension, was off-limits to foreign reporters, as were other Xinjiang hot spots such as the city of Kashgar, the site of violence in 2008.

Journalists from the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau were freer than their mainland counterparts but still encountered obstruction. In February, China announced onerous requirements for these journalists entering the mainland, including the need to get permission from interviewees in advance of travel. Hong Kong and Macau journalists feared regulation from afar but were equally concerned at signs of local self-censorship. Reporter Daisy Chu told CPJ she lost her job at *Esquire* magazine's Hong Kong edition after revealing on her personal blog that editors had withdrawn a feature on the Tiananmen anniversary. *Esquire* did not respond to CPJ inquiries. Mak Yinting, chairwoman of the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), expressed concern that the dismissal implied that June 4 was off-limits to Hong Kong reporters.

The HKJA asserted itself against the mainland in early September, leading street protests after police roughed up and detained at least three Hong Kong journalists on assignment in Urumqi. Press officials in Xinjiang defended the action, saying the journalists had been inciting unrest, according to HKJA. Mainland Chinese journalists could not mount their own displays of protest without fear of reprisal, although local newspapers reported that they were menaced and assaulted by police, security agents, and citizens in the course of their work throughout the year. *Guangzhou Ribao* daily said three of its journalists were attacked on the job in separate episodes in August. One, reporter Liu Manyuan, was hospitalized after being assaulted by district security guards in Dongguan City while investigating the death of a young woman, the paper said.

Progress for foreign journalists was offset by tighter restrictions on their interview subjects and Chinese assistants. In February 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs-linked Beijing Personnel Service Corporation for Diplomatic Missions issued a code of conduct for Chinese aides of foreign news outlets. Already forbidden by law from writing under their own bylines, Chinese assistants—who can find legal employment with foreign news providers only through the personnel service—faced dismissal or loss of accreditation for conducting independent interviews, the new code decreed.

Foreign journalists investigating potentially critical stories told CPJ they were increasingly anxious about repercussions for local colleagues and sources. Several Tibetans and Uighurs who spoke openly about minority issues in their respective regions were detained in 2009, lending weight to those concerns. At least three Tibetan writers were arrested between February and July. Overseas Tibetan rights groups reported in November that two had been separately tried and sentenced in closed-door proceedings in Gansu province, both for revealing state secrets. Kunchok Tsephel Gopey Tsang, manager of the Tibetan cultural Web site *Chomei*, was jailed for 15 years, while environmental activist and writer Kunga Tsayang was

sentenced to five years in prison. Tibetan rights organizations said Dokru Tsultrim, a monk who wrote several articles in support of the Dalai Lama, remained in custody at the end of the year, but his location and legal status were not known.

Uighur Web site managers were also targeted. Dilimulati Paerhati, a U.K.-based student, told Amnesty International that unidentified men took his brother, Dilixiati Paerhati,

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » More access for foreign reporters, tighter rules for local assistants.
- » As online use grows, government censors sites, jails critics.

24

KEY STATISTIC
Journalists jailed as of
December 1, 2009.

manager of a popular Uighur Web site *Diyarim*, from his Urumqi apartment on August 7. “He only edits a Web site; he hasn’t done anything wrong,” his brother told the group. Ilham Tohti, a professor and founder of the Web site *Uighurbiz*, was questioned about the contents of the site and detained for more than six weeks before being released in August, according to international news reports. Security officials later arrested Hailaite Niyazi, a journalist who managed *Uighurbiz* until June 2009, on charges of endangering national security, the reports said. Niyazi formerly worked for state newspapers *Xinjiang Legal News* and *Xinjiang Economic Daily*.

Han dissidents working online also remained vulnerable: *Tianwang* Web site founder Huang Qi, imprisoned in June 2008, was tried August 5 on charges of possessing state secrets after advocating for earthquake survivors in his writing. He was sentenced to three years in prison during a brief hearing in November.

At least 24 journalists were imprisoned for their work when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census on December 1. Most worked online, publishing independent news and opinion on local or overseas Web sites that did not have political sponsorships. Many lawyers representing these journalists complained of irregularities in the prosecution of their clients, including prolonged detentions without charge. More than half of the journalists were jailed on vague, antistate charges such as revealing state secrets or subverting state power.

The targeting of online journalists was part of a broader campaign to expand government control of the Internet—often in the guise of anti-pornography campaigns—in ways that tested the patience of ordinary users. The Google-owned video-sharing site YouTube was blocked for much of the year. Several Internet users complained it was still blocked as late as November. Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang declined to say whether Google’s English-language search engine had been blocked after users reported accessibility problems in June, but asserted that the search engine had “spread large amounts of vulgar content.”

Chinese users embraced the micro-blog and social networking to spread news and opinion, but over the summer Twitter and the social network platform Facebook disappeared from screens in much of China, apparently victims of the government’s Golden Shield Project, which monitors and censors the Internet. Twitter and Facebook remained “intermittently” blocked in China in September, according to freelance journalist Thomas Crampton, aggregating data collected by the Herdict project of Harvard University’s Berkman Center for Internet and Society. The project collates individual reports of blocked sites. Several local micro-blogs and social networking sites also closed for “maintenance.” Broad censorship was at work in Xinjiang, where whole swaths went offline after July’s unrest. Nearly four months later, business owners were still commuting to neighboring Gansu province to access e-mail, according to international news reports.

In May, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology in Beijing

caused an outcry with the announcement that pre-installation of two software programs, Green Dam and Youth Escort, would be mandatory on all personal computers sold in China as of July 1, ostensibly to filter pornography. Only the programs’ local manufacturers, poised to make enormous profits, welcomed the arrangement. Analysts exposed security flaws, violations to international trade agreements, and the programs’ potential to monitor individual Internet use and block politically sensitive keywords. Local bloggers and international technology companies united in outrage. The Global Network Initiative—a collaboration of Internet corporations, academics, and human rights groups, including CPJ, to promote best practices for Internet and technology companies in defense of free speech—issued advice for companies struggling with the software’s implications. The government first delayed the mandate; by July officials backed down, denying they had ever intended one.

Free expression advocates claimed victory in the battle, but the conflict continued. In the run-up to National Day celebrating the founding of the People’s Republic of China on October 1, several analysts commented that online censorship was as severe as it had ever been. At Hong Kong University’s China Media Project, Qian Gang and David Bandurski noted that pressure on the mainstream media to report only positive, patriotic news appeared tighter than it had been for the 50th anniversary. Propaganda department directives for news outlets dictated limits on historical analysis as well as breaking news. “Do not allow articles that ‘keep dwelling on the ‘60s and ‘70s.’ Look back immediately starting from 1978 [when reformist Deng Xiaoping came to power and started to launch economic reforms], with the main subjects of development and progress,” read one, according to the Berkeley-based *China Digital Times* Web site. In mid-December, the agency in charge of China’s .cn domain announced that individuals must provide identification and a business affiliation in order to register new Web sites. Although Internet users in China could still register sites under other domains, many were concerned the registration requirements signaled new limits on online expression.

Domestic news outlets must be sponsored by a party-affiliated organ, leaving them susceptible to political pressure. CPJ research shows that commercial success following market reform has provided some media groups with both the incentive and the political protection to sidestep the propaganda department and publish aggressive investigative reporting. But limits remain. On October 12, the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported that 11 executives and 70 percent of staff had resigned from the Beijing-based *Caijing*, a business weekly and flagship of Chinese watchdog journalism. *Caijing*’s founder and editor, Hu Shuli, resigned soon after. Journalists associated with the magazine refused to comment, but the news followed rumors that the publication’s management had decided to scale back politically controversial reporting. “It was not the editorial side but the

purse strings calling for caution,” according to *Foreign Policy* magazine, placing responsibility on the SEEC Media Group, which owns *Caijing* under the auspices of the party-linked All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce. Although the circumstances remained murky at year’s end, journalists faced the possibility that editorial freedom was threatened by commercial and political interests acting not in opposition, but in concert.

NEPAL

NEPAL’S NEWS MEDIA ENTERED 2009 IN A STATE OF CRISIS. ATTACKS on the press had escalated in late 2008 amid a climate of impunity. The Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), a local press freedom group, led weeklong, nationwide demonstrations to raise awareness about the deteriorating environment. On December 28, 2008, Maoist leaders signed a 10-point agreement to address the lawless situation. Clauses included a promise to create a governmental bureau to investigate press freedom violations, local news reports said.

But a full year later, as 2009 was coming to an end, the agreement had yet to be implemented and optimism was scant. The January slaying of a journalist who had documented Maoist land seizures had further chilled a press corps that had grown accustomed to unpunished attacks.

Nepal had made a historic political shift in 2008 from a monarchy to a coalition-ruled democratic republic under the leadership of former Maoist rebels. During the decade-long civil war that preceded a 2006 peace accord and transition to multi-party democracy, both rebels and monarchists were responsible for harassment, detention, disappearances, and murders of journalists, nearly all of which have gone unpunished. Abuses did not cease with the communist faction’s inclusion in the democratic process. Maoists accused of murdering journalists Birendra Shah in 2007 and J.P. Joshi in 2008 remained at large. International human rights groups said the party’s Youth Communist League abducted and likely murdered freelancer Prakash Singh Thakuri in 2007. Police dropped an investigation into the disappearance—Thakuri’s body was never recovered—in February 2009, according to FNJ.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government fails to investigate press freedom abuses.
- » Reporter slain after covering Maoist land seizures.

KEY STATISTIC

8th Ranking on CPJ Impunity Index, making it one of world’s worst for press.

In late 2008, the Nepali-language monthly *Nepali Sarokar* catalogued war-time Maoist land seizures on the Terai plains, in southern Siraha district. On January 11, as many as 15 men with knives entered the compound where the article’s author, Uma Singh, a print and radio reporter in her 20s, had rented a ground-floor apartment. A neighbor discovered the journalist, mortally stabbed, on the veranda of her one-room dwelling. The brutal murder combined the worst of Nepal’s media climate: ineffective police investigation, alleged Maoist involvement, and ethnic tensions destabilizing the plains along the India-Nepal border. Local journalists said police ignored Singh’s profession as a possible motive for fear of political repercussions and arrested five people, including the victim’s sister-in-law. The five were accused of killing Singh over a property dispute.

Property did play a role, according to an International Media Mission report compiled by press freedom groups that visited Nepal in February; Singh believed Maoists abducted and murdered her father and brother in 2005 and had seized family land. Yet she defended all victims displaced in the conflict, and addressed sensitive issues including communal violence and women’s rights in print and on air.

The arrests of the five people, who included a local Maoist, did not assuage the concerns of Singh’s colleagues, who said at least two cadres affiliated with a former Maoist minister tied to abuses Singh documented had fled the country after the crime. Other suspects had links with armed groups of ethnic Madhesis, who traditionally occupy the plains and are engaged in an often-violent campaign for political autonomy, or, at its most extreme, a separate state. The Terai Ekta Parishad, one of dozens of such groups, made an unverified claim to have murdered Singh, according to the international mission.

“There is no denying that [Singh] may have had a personal stake in the issue of land seizures, but her journalism was exercised in the larger public interest,” the mission report said. After consulting with police, family members, and colleagues, the mission concluded that, although there were several overlapping motives and actors involved, her work was a major factor in her death.

Singh’s killing was not solved by late year, and its shadow hung over the Terai press. Several journalists left the region, according to local news reports. Madhesi groups separately threatened two regional correspondents for independent media group Kantipur Publications: Jitendra Khadka in January and Manika Jha in February. Parsa district’s Gadhimai FM programmer Gyanendra Raj Misra was wounded in the hand in a February shooting that FNJ reported was work-related. In August, the Madhesh Terai Forum in Saptari district banned distribution of Nepali-language newspapers—the region is dominated by dialects of Hindi—and torched 15,000 copies of national newspapers, according to FNJ.

After the 2008 elections, in which the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) won a majority, the Maoist-fronted coalition government began talks

with some pro-independence Madhesis. By mid-2009, though, the government was focused on its own conflicts. In May, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal dismissed the chief of the army; in a move many believed was unconstitutional, President Ram Baran Yadav overturned the decision, prompting Dahal to resign. Maoist lawmakers walked out on a May 23 vote to select his replacement, and Madhav Kumar Nepal, of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist Leninist), ran unopposed.

The strife deepened political fissures, and journalistic objectivity attracted punishment more often than praise. The principals behind attacks were varied, and included official agents. Police threatened *Janapratibimba* editor Sanjaya Saha in May for publishing a story alleging they took bribes, FNJ reported. Shiva Oli from the western Doti district went into hiding for three days in July after officials involved in a corrupt drinking water project he exposed had taken him for questioning. Later in Doti, on August 23, police beat *Nepal Samacharpatra* journalist Bimal Bista while subduing a mob and detained him for 48 hours, according to FNJ.

Journalists cited several confrontations with Youth Communist League members, but youth branches of other political parties were also abusive. Students, farmers, and trade unionists—often politically affiliated—assailed journalists covering their activities. In multiple incidents catalogued by FNJ, vandals stoked fires with stacks of newspapers. The national news group Kantipur Publications was a particular target, but provincial news outlets also suffered. Editorials from the capital bemoaned the rise of self-censorship.

Analysts said press freedom clauses in the interim constitution enacted in 2007 provide a positive framework for the document's final manifestation, which Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal declared would be adopted on schedule by May 2010. However, journalists complained that existing legislation, such as the 2007 Right to Information Act, has yet to be implemented. Prime Minister Nepal also committed to reversing impunity in a range of human rights abuses. Nepal ranked eighth worst in the world on CPJ's 2009 Impunity Index, which lists countries that have consistently failed to solve journalist murders.

NORTH KOREA

DURING A DIPLOMATIC STANDOFF THAT LASTED ALMOST FIVE MONTHS, two American journalists from San Francisco-based Current TV were arrested, tried, pardoned, and released. Charged with illegally crossing the border from China on March 17, they had been sentenced to 20 years of “reform through hard labor” after a closed-door trial, according to the official Korea Central News Agency.

Euna Lee, a video editor on one of her first reporting trips, and Laura Ling,

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Two U.S. journalists held for five months after crossing border.
- » Citizen reporters begin to smuggle news out of the country.

1st

KEY STATISTIC

Ranking on CPJ's list of Most Censored Nations.

an experienced reporter for Current TV, returned to the United States after former President Bill Clinton traveled to Pyongyang to escort them home following behind-the-scenes negotiations. While in North Korea, Clinton met with leader Kim Jong Il, who granted the pardons. Although some press reports said Clinton had given an apology to Kim, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said no such apology had been offered.

The journalists' hard labor sentence was never carried out; they were held, separated from each other, in a combination guesthouse and government-run hotel outside Pyongyang. Although psychologically distressed, they said they were never physically abused.

Several factors complicated the situation: The vice president in the Clinton administration, Al Gore, was a founder and investor in Current TV; tensions on the Korean Peninsula were running high because of North Korean missile tests and the allegations by many in the international community that the country was resuming its capacity to produce material suitable for use in nuclear weapons. Many Korea watchers linked the militaristic behavior to the need for the government to assert its domestic authority after the announcement by official North Korea media that Kim's son, Kim Jong Un, was to be named his successor. Without diplomatic ties with Pyongyang, the United States relied on the Swedish Embassy in North Korea to represent it on the Americans' behalf. Ambassador Mats Foyer met several times with the two journalists while they were being held but was not allowed to attend their trial.

Lee and Ling had traveled to the border area with the head of Current TV's Vanguard investigative unit, Mitchell Koss, an experienced and well-traveled television journalist. Ling was Koss' deputy and the most prominent reporter in the Web-based broadcaster's investigative group. After they were freed, the two women recounted that Koss and their Chinese driver were able to escape North Korean police after they had crossed the Tumen River, briefly entering the country illegally.

The group said they had been covering the story of North Koreans in the border area within China, particularly the plight of women forced into prostitution. The two women said the groundwork for their trip had been organized by the Rev. Chun Ki-won of Durihana Mission, a fundamentalist Christian group with roots in South Korea and the United States. The Associated Press, which reached Chun in Seoul while the women were being held, said “he warned them

repeatedly to stay away from the long and often unmarked border. Armed North Korean guards are known to threaten journalists who venture to the region to get a glimpse into the reclusive nation.” Current TV suppressed all discussion of the case on its Web site while the women were being held.

The use of a prominent U.S. politician to retrieve Americans held in North Korea was not without precedent. In 1994, Bill Richardson, a U.S. congressman at the time, flew to Pyongyang to win the release of a U.S. helicopter pilot and the body of a crew member after their aircraft had strayed across the demilitarized zone. In 1996, Richardson brought back an American who had been held for three months on spying charges after swimming in the Yalu River, which forms another part of the border with China. And, at the height of the Cold War in 1968, North Korea released about 80 crew members of the USS Pueblo after holding them for 11 months and torturing them. Reports in *The New York Times* from the time say the U.S. issued an apology and a written statement admitting the Pueblo had been in North Korean waters.

Advocacy for the release of Lee and Ling occurred on many levels. North Korea is the most heavily censored country in the world and is notoriously resistant to outside influence, so CPJ advocated for all members of the stalled Six Party Talks—China, Japan, North and South Korea, Russia, and the United States—to work together for the release of the women. The families of the two journalists, led by Laura’s sister, Lisa Ling, who is also a journalist, maintained a low-key grassroots movement that held quiet vigils around the country, and made use of Facebook and Twitter for appeals. A few days before the journalists’ June 8 trial, the families appeared on several popular U.S. interview programs, pleading to North Korea for clemency. It was a tactic they repeated later as the situation dragged on.

Lisa Ling, who stayed in close touch with CPJ, said she received almost daily briefings from the State Department or Gore. She had also organized a group of North Korea experts who were advising her on possible strategies and outcomes. She told CPJ that her sister (who, like Lee, had been allowed to communicate with her family in the U.S. through telephone and letters) had strongly advocated for her own freedom, having persuaded her captors that she should be allowed to communicate with her family to bring pressure on the U.S. government for their release.

Attitudes in the United States toward the two journalists ranged from widespread grassroots support to anger over their having taken what some saw as unnecessary risk. In South Korea, criticism was greater. Some South Koreans were angry that the women were allowed to communicate with their families, while a South Korean factory manager working in North Korea’s Kaesong industrial complex had been grabbed for espionage around the same time but held incommunicado. Only the man’s last name, Yoo, was released by the North Koreans. He was released several weeks after Lee and Ling.

While CPJ research showed that North Korea remained the world’s most censored nation, information began leaking out at a growing rate in 2009. The story Lee and Ling were covering—the plight of women who crossed into China—was part of a larger story about the porous border with China and the influx of Koreans seeking economic opportunity, fleeing famine, and, in some cases, escaping political persecution. The flow into China accelerated during the famine of 1990 in North Korea and has never really stopped. And, with improved relations between South Korea and China, the border area had become a lookout post into North Korea. Fundamentalist Christian groups, like the Rev. Chun Ki-won’s Durihana Mission used by Lee and Ling, operated on the Chinese side of the river, aiding refugees, gathering information, and proselytizing.

Kay Seok, a researcher for Human Rights Watch and an expert on Korea affairs, said that for the first time “reporters” with no training had emerged in North Korea. These were North Koreans who surreptitiously recorded conversations with government officials or even people on the street, then smuggled the recordings out of the country, where they were transcribed and published in media outlets in South Korea and Japan. These new information-gatherers were paid for their efforts, and were primarily motivated by the money, she said.

Seok wrote in an op-ed piece in *The Washington Post* that “for many North Koreans the changes set in motion by the famine are irreversible. In fact, many North Koreans that I have met, especially the young, say they want more change. They have survived the country’s worst disaster in half a century. Compared with their parents, they are far more informed, open-minded and unafraid. And therein lies hope for North Korea’s future.”

PAKISTAN

AS PAKISTAN’S MILITARY LAUNCHED TWO MAJOR OFFENSIVES WITHIN its borders, officials pressured news media to report favorably on the conflicts while the Taliban and other militants threatened and attacked critical reporters. Reporters for Urdu- and Pashto-language news outlets came under the greatest pressure because of their wider influence among Pakistanis. Journalists who opted to embed with the military said they were forced to comply with heavy-handed restrictions on what they were allowed to see and report.

With varying levels of access and success, Pakistan’s news media covered the military offensive beginning in April to drive Taliban and Taliban-linked groups out of the Swat Valley in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and a second drive into South Waziristan in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, or FATA, that began in October.

Neither offensive was militarily conclusive, and the response from the militants' side was a horrific round of suicide explosions, car bombs, and armed attacks. After the military moved into South Waziristan in October, insurgent attacks included a suicide bombing at the U.N. World Food Program in Islamabad; an assault on the General Headquarters of the Pakistan Army; the murders of a brigadier general and education minister; several market bombings in the north-western city of Peshawar, the worst of which took 100 lives; and a suicide bombing on a Peshawar office used by Pakistan's main intelligence agency. The army blamed most of the attacks on the Tehreek-e-Taliban, the group led by Hakimullah Mehsud that it was battling in South Waziristan.

In July, CPJ traveled to Islamabad and Peshawar to meet with journalists covering the military offensive in the Swat Valley. About 260 local reporters were forced along with about 2 million others from the general population to flee the combat areas, according to the Khyber Union of Journalists. Some stayed behind, but their coverage was severely limited by the fighting and by threats of reprisal from militants. The homes of at least six journalists were leveled by militants in retribution for critical reporting. Much of the front-line coverage was handled by Pakistani reporters from outside the region who had embedded with the military. They encountered the limitations that embedding implies: skewed viewpoints, self-imposed censorship, and outright military control of information. Video was heavily censored; coverage of destruction caused by army shelling, for example, was banned.

Calling its operation "Rah-e-Rast" (or "Back on Track"), the military focused its efforts on the NWFP's Malakand Division. In recent years indigenous local militant groups with links to the tribal areas had succeeded in establishing control and abrogating peace treaties with successive Islamabad governments. At one point, militant groups were in control of areas only 60 miles (100 kilometers) from the capital. Journalists described the fighting in the Swat Valley as a "protracted low-intensity conflict," and several said militants continued patrolling in their hometowns months after the government had claimed success. (Several noted in the next breath that they would not dare report the militant presence in bylined news stories for fear of retribution.) "We still receive anonymous telephone calls, we still receive hand-written letters from the militants," said Sher Shamseen Shah, president of the Peshawar Press Club. The risks facing reporters in the NWFP came into sharp relief in December when a suicide bomber set off an explosive as he tried to enter the Peshawar Press Club. Four people were killed, including a club employee and a police constable. Roughly 30 journalists were inside for a press conference when the bomb exploded.

The second military offensive, this into Waziristan, began in mid-October, with two army divisions totaling about 28,000 troops backed by local Frontier

Corps members who joined when fighting came to their hometowns. The BBC and others estimated the Taliban to number between 10,000 and 20,000, with several hundred hardened ethnic Uzbek fighters adding support. By the end of October, the army was restricting reporters' access to the fighting, which local residents, relaying news by telephone, said had been fierce.

The military did not allow reporters to embed in Waziristan until late year. "They don't like to take reporters into areas until the hard part of the fighting is over," Mazhar Abbas, deputy news director at ARY News, told CPJ. With little or no access, local reporters used phones to maintain contact with sources and witnesses. "In Waziristan, even the local stringers aren't reporting from there. They get telephone reports, but they are not there to witness the fighting—the army told them to clear out of the conflict area," Abbas said.

Journalists told CPJ that the Pakistani military, while making some improvements in media relations, lagged well behind the Taliban in terms of accessibility and disseminating information. "The Taliban need the media, too," Abbas noted. "They are using text messaging more than ever to push information to journalists." Having waged an insurgent-style war for more than two decades, first against the Russians and now NATO, the Taliban were media savvy, if hardly media friendly.

Journalists were hard-pressed to cover this exceptionally dangerous, logistically challenging story, which was unfolding on multiple fronts. Baluchistan, where Taliban operating in Afghanistan tended to congregate, was removed from the fiercest activity, but there, too, reporters were beaten, obstructed, and threatened. "The Baluch nationalists often dictate to us that their reports should be published in such and such a manner," Razaur Rahman, editor of the *Daily Express*, told the International Federation of Journalists.

Four journalists lost their lives in 2009, one of them during the Swat Valley military offensive. Janullah Hashimzada, who worked for Shamshad TV, an Afghan station, was killed in the Khyber Agency in August when three gunmen in a passing car fired at the Afghan journalist and his colleague, Ali Khan, while they were traveling on a public minibus near the town of Jamrud. Hashimzada, the station's Peshawar-based bureau chief for Pakistan, also reported for The Associated Press, the Pajhwok Afghan News agency, and other news outlets. No one claimed

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Press has very limited access during two military offensives.
- » Reporters face attacks, threats from all sides. Four are killed.

6

KEY STATISTIC

Homes of journalists destroyed by militants in retaliatory attacks.

responsibility for the killing, but Hashimzada was known as a critic of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, and his reports had challenged authorities and intelligence agencies in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. “He received threats four weeks [earlier] to leave Peshawar and not report Taliban and Al-Qaeda activity in Pakistan,” Danish Karokhel, director of Pajhwok Afghan News agency, told CPJ. Khan was severely wounded in the attack.

Musa Khankhel, who worked for Geo TV and its print affiliate *The News*, was killed in February while covering a peace march led by Muslim cleric Sufi Muhammad. He was found with gunshot wounds to the body and back of the head in a militant-controlled area near the town of Matta after he became separated from the rest of his four-person reporting team. A BBC report citing Khankhel’s brother said the journalist had been abducted at gunpoint from the peace march, and that his hands and feet were bound when his body was discovered.

In January, a suicide bomber killed Tahir Awan, a freelance reporter for the local *Eitedal* and *Apna Akhbar* newspapers, and Mohammad Imran, a cameraman trainee for Express TV, in the town of Dera Ismail Khan, in the NWFP. They died in an explosion that had followed a smaller blast, a double bombing apparently intended to kill early responders to the scene. At least five other people were killed and several more injured in the early evening attack. Dera Ismail Khan had been home to sectarian fighting between Shiite and Sunni groups for years, although it was not clear if the bombing was tied directly to that conflict.

The news media encountered growing interference from the government of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani. Several developments were worrisome. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Sherry Rehman, a former journalist, resigned in March after Zardari aides pressured cable carriers to remove or give less preferable placement to two prominent news channels, Geo and Aaj, noted for their critical coverage of the government. Geo said the government also exerted “immense pressure” on the government of the United Arab Emirates, where Geo has broadcast operations, to halt production of “Meray Mutabiq” (According to Me), a popular program that was critical of the government. And in October, a key committee in the National Assembly backed legislation that would allow the government to ban live news coverage deemed terrorist-related and restrict material deemed defamatory to the government or military. Abbas, the ARY News editor, said it was “almost a revival” of the censorship imposed by Pervez Musharraf in his last, desperate months in office. Legislation was pending in late year. In an effort to head off government censorship, representatives of eight prominent stations drafted a set of voluntary rules to govern the depiction of violence.

An international journalist came under threat in late year. On November 5,

The Nation newspaper cited unnamed sources in accusing *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Matthew Rosenberg of working for the CIA, Israeli intelligence, and the U.S. military contractor Blackwater (known now as Xe Services). The unsubstantiated accusation, which forced Rosenberg to leave the country, drew sharp rebukes from *Journal* Managing Editor Robert Thomson, CPJ, and international news organizations. In a letter to Qamar Zaman Kaira, minister for information and broadcasting, the news organizations noted that Rosenberg was a “respected journalist of high standing” and said the story had needlessly raised risks for everyone in the press corps.

The Nation struck again the same month with a front-page story and photo accusing Daniel Berehulak, a photographer for Getty Images, of being a CIA agent. As in the other case, *The Nation* offered no substantiation. Hugh Pinney, Getty’s senior director of photography, wrote the paper’s editor, Shireen Mazari, to say that the story “needlessly increased” the risks facing its photographer. CPJ pointed out that such accusations have the effect of raising suspicion about all journalists, creating hazards for everyone.

PHILIPPINES

IN THE DEADLIEST EVENT FOR THE PRESS EVER RECORDED BY CPJ, 29 journalists and two media support workers were ambushed and brutally slain on November 23 as they traveled in Maguindanao province with a convoy of people who intended to file gubernatorial candidacy papers for a local politician. In all, 57 people were killed in a shocking display of barbarism apparently motivated by political clan rivalries. The bodies were dumped in mass graves in a remote clearing in the town of Ampatuan.

An authoritative report by four local press organizations—the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, MindaNews, and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism—said most of the victims had worked for Mindanao-based newspapers, with some employed by radio and television outlets.

The entourage was on its way to the provincial capitol of Shariff

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Maguindanao massacre highlights deep-seated climate of impunity.
- » Local and international groups mobilize to offer aid, seek justice.

29

KEY STATISTIC

Journalists slain in a politically motivated ambush, the single deadliest event ever recorded by CPJ.

Aguak to file documents in support of local political leader Esmael Mangudadatu's candidacy for provincial governor. Having been warned of a possible ambush, Mangudadatu did not travel with the group but instead sent female family members and supporters, and invited the press to go along, in the belief that women and independent witnesses would not be attacked, according to local and foreign media reports.

Police quickly identified Andal Ampatuan Jr., mayor of Datu Unsay in Maguindanao, as a prime suspect behind the killings. Ampatuan surrendered to authorities but proclaimed his innocence. Investigators said that about 100 heavily armed men loyal to Ampatuan abducted the group, took it to a more remote hillside, and then opened fire. Reuters quoted one of its photographers at the scene as saying that many bodies had both bullet and machete wounds. Some of the victims had their hands tied behind their backs, and one of the female victims was pregnant, Reuters and other sources reported.

The journalists were not directly targeted for their work, but were the victims of a long-running feud between two rival political clans competing for supremacy in the area. The massacre was not linked to Mindanao's decades-old guerrilla battle between Muslim secessionists and Philippine army troops (many of whom are being trained by the U.S. military). As is the case in more than 85 percent of journalist killings worldwide, the victims in Maguindanao were local journalists pursuing a local story.

No single event has claimed as many journalists' lives in the 18 years since CPJ began compiling detailed records. According to CPJ research, the deadliest prior event for the press came in Iraq on October 12, 2006, when 11 employees of Al-Shaabiyah television were killed in an attack at the station's Baghdad studios.

It was a massive political setback for the government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which had political ties with the Ampatuan clan. A week after the killing, Arroyo, whose administration had become increasingly unpopular, announced that she would not seek re-election but would instead run for a congressional seat in her home district of Pampanga.

The response in the Philippines and globally was immediate. CPJ joined with local and international media organizations to travel to the area to investigate and raise funds to aid the families of the victims. The investigative and support work was expected to continue well into 2010.

The massacre underscored the deep-seated climate of impunity in the Philippines, an atmosphere in which politicians have felt free to use deadly violence to settle scores, win office, and further personal interests. To fight the phenomenon, CPJ worked with local partners for a second year in its Global Campaign Against Impunity. The campaign presses government officials for greater resolve, provides legal support and assistance to victim families, and pursues court tactics that im-

prove the odds for arrests and convictions.

Although overshadowed by the brutality in Maguindanao, some positive developments were reported during the year, including a rare conviction and Supreme Court decisions to change trial venues to more neutral and secure settings. On April 29, a regional trial court in Malita, Davao Del Sur province, convicted the killer of radio journalist Armando Pace, who was gunned down in Digos City in 2006. The defendant was sentenced to 17 years in prison based on the testimony of a 16-year-old student who witnessed the crime.

Court proceedings against two suspects accused of ordering the 2005 killing of investigative reporter Marlene Garcia-Esperat progressed in April when a local court denied a motion from the defendants, Department of Agriculture officials Osmena Montaner and Estrella Sabay, to dismiss murder charges. Three men were convicted and sentenced to life in prison in 2006 for carrying out the murder. During their trial, the two agriculture officials were identified as the masterminds behind the crime.

In August, the Supreme Court granted a change of venue in the case from Tacarong City to Manila. The request had been filed by the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists, a coalition of six media groups and a CPJ partner in the Global Campaign Against Impunity. The coalition sought the venue change due to concerns about the safety of witnesses and prosecutors, and possible political interference in the local court.

Montaner and Sabay evaded warrants for their arrest throughout the year, raising criticism among relatives and press freedom advocates that police were not vigorously pursuing the suspects. Police responded to concerns in this and other cases by announcing the creation of 21 dedicated "tracker teams" to hunt down suspects and post more than 6,000 wanted posters, replete with rewards.

But attacks on the press remained common, continuing an exceptional cycle of violence and impunity. Two radio commentators, Ernie Rollin and Crispin Perez, were murdered for their reporting, and newspaper reporter Jojo Trajano was killed while covering a police raid on an organized crime group that ended in a gun battle.

Rollin, a morning news anchor at DXSY Radio, was killed on February 23 while waiting for a bus in Oroquieta City, capital of Misamis Occidental province in the northern part of Mindanao island. A masked assailant shot Rollin in the head after firing an initial hail of bullets from the back of a motorcycle, according to a witness quoted by the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, a local press freedom group. Murder charges were filed in June against a former member of the communist New People's Army.

An assailant fatally shot Perez, a commentator at DWDO Radio and a practicing lawyer, on June 9 in San Jose City in the central province of Occidental

Mindoro. According to local news reports, the assailant pretended to solicit Perez's legal advice in front of his home before drawing a pistol and twice shooting the reporter. The killer fled on a motorcycle. Police arrested a suspect in July.

At least 65 Philippine journalists have been murdered in direct relation to their work since 1992, with convictions obtained in just five cases, according to CPJ research. A handful of media murder cases moved tentatively through the justice system in 2009, slowed by both the reluctance of local judges to proceed with cases involving influential officials and the inability or unwillingness of local police to apprehend suspects. That slow progress was on display in the case of murdered journalist Dennis Cuesta, who was shot in August 2008 in General Santos City on Mindanao island.

A witness identified Police Chief Inspector Redempto "Boy" Acharon, cousin of the city's mayor, as one of Cuesta's assassins. Acharon's lawyer successfully petitioned in February to have the case reassigned from one local court to another—which promptly withdrew a previously issued arrest warrant. The warrant was reissued in May, but the suspect remained free in late year. Police told CPJ they were looking for Acharon; local journalists said the suspect could be seen in public restaurants and at his residence in the city. The witness was forced into a government protection program after receiving threats.

CPJ's Shawn Crispin, reporting from General Santos City, wrote about the case in a special report in August: "The circumstances surrounding Cuesta's murder conform to a disturbing pattern in this country: A journalist is shot and killed; local police manipulate the evidence to protect influential people accused in the crime; potential witnesses are intimidated, bought off, or killed so that they never appear in court; the defense employs stalling tactics to break the will of remaining witnesses; the case goes unsolved and the culture of impunity is reinforced."

In the report, "Under Oath, Under Threat," Crispin highlighted the crucial role that witness protection programs and trial venue changes can play in winning convictions in journalist murders. In July, the Supreme Court moved the Cuesta case from General Santos City to the national capital. The eyewitness, Bob Flores, who was moved into a safe house in August 2008 along with his wife and three young children, told CPJ that he is determined to testify. "I will not quit," he said, "no matter how long it takes."

Two journalists narrowly survived assassination attempts during the year. On March 5, gunmen critically wounded reporter Nilo Labares outside his home in the Macasandig township of Cagayan de Oro City on the island of Mindanao. Labares, who underwent emergency surgery to remove a kidney, later identified his assailants as having connections to an illegal gambling operation he had frequently criticized during his radio program. The accused gunman was freed on bail, while three other suspects were identified but not arrested, according to

news reports.

On May 20, gunmen critically wounded radio broadcaster Harrison Manalac while he was riding his motorcycle home from DXXE Radio in Buug town, Zamboanga Sibugay province, according to news reports. Police Chief Federico Castro told local journalists that police were seeking a motive for the attack, noting that Manalac had produced several provocative commentaries on political and community issues, according to a report in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

Two journalists were slain under unclear circumstances; CPJ is continuing to investigate those cases. Badroddin Abbas, a frequent contributor at DXCM-Radyo Ukay, was shot in the head and killed on January 21 by two assailants while driving a minivan in Cotabato City on the southern island of Mindanao. On July 27, two unidentified men shot and killed Godofredo Linao outside the offices of Radyo Natin, a station where he worked as a political commentator in Surigao del Sol province.

SRI LANKA

ON MAY 19, THE GOVERNMENT FORMALLY DECLARED A VICTORY in its 26-year civil war with the secessionist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which had claimed territory for an ethnic Tamil homeland. Victory came at a high price for the press. Escalating attacks on independent journalists coincided with the government's 2006 decision to pursue an all-out military victory, CPJ found in a February special report, "Failure to Investigate." Ethnic Tamil journalists seen by the government as supporting independence had long been under murderous assault, but physical and verbal attacks on Sinhalese and Muslim journalists critical of the government's military operations began accelerating in 2006 as well. These attacks—which in 2009 included a murder, a bombing, and several assaults—occurred with complete impunity.

On January 6, as many as 20 assailants carried out a 3 a.m. bombing that destroyed the control room of the country's largest independent broadcasting company, Maharajah Broadcasting, knocking the prominent Sirasa TV and six sister radio and television stations off the air, according to news accounts and CPJ

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Editor murdered, broadcaster bombed, reporters assaulted.
- » Columnist convicted of terrorism for his writing.

KEY STATISTIC

○ Number of convictions in 10 journalist murders since 1992.

interviews. The blast came after state media criticized the broadcaster for its coverage of military operations.

The bombing was immediately followed by two violent episodes in which motorcyclists wielding iron bars and wooden poles attacked prominent journalists. A January 8 assault by eight men on four motorcycles resulted in the death of newspaper editor Lasantha Wickramatunga and set off a wave of domestic and international protest. Wickramatunga foresaw his own murder, writing in an editorial published three days after his death: "Countless journalists have been harassed, threatened, and killed. It has been my honor to belong to all those categories and now especially the last."

The other January attack, on Upali Tennakoon, editor of the Sinhala-language, pro-government weekly *Rivira* and his wife, Dhammika, came at about 6:40 a.m. on January 23. This time, four men on two motorcycles severely injured Tennakoon. Soon after, the couple fled to the United States seeking asylum.

The government denounced the January attacks but sought to deflect responsibility. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa and Lakshman Yapa Abeywardena, the top officials in the Ministry of Mass Media and Information, told Colombo newspapers there was a "massive conspiracy" to discredit the government by destabilizing the country with attacks on prominent figures. They said a comprehensive inquiry would be carried out to find the attackers in all three January cases. Such inquiries had been promised in the past; as in the past, the 2009 cases led to no conclusive government action by late year.

With international outrage growing, CPJ sent a representative to Colombo to investigate the assaults. Eighteen journalists were killed in Sri Lanka between 1992 and 2009, according to CPJ research, and 10 of them were murdered. No convictions have been obtained in any of the murders, a law enforcement failure that propelled Sri Lanka to fourth place on CPJ's Impunity Index. The index is a ranking of countries where journalists are killed regularly and authorities are unable to solve the crimes.

CPJ said the government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa should be held directly responsible for impunity surrounding the attacks. Nine of the murders took place after Rajapaksa rose to high office, first as prime minister in April 2004 and then as president in November 2005. CPJ testified before U.S. Senate and House committees, as well as Canada's House of Commons, about the January attacks and the history of abuse directed at journalists in the country.

The Sri Lankan government maintained a hard line of denial after CPJ released its findings. A Washington meeting between a CPJ delegation and Sri Lankan Ambassador Jaliya Wickramasuriya did not change the government's outward position—no assurances were given and little responsibility was ac-

cepted. The acts of intimidation and the absence of substantive government response drove at least 11 Sri Lankan journalists into exile between June 2008 and June 2009, CPJ research found. Sri Lankan journalists accounted for more than a quarter of the journalists worldwide who fled their countries during that period after being attacked, harassed, or threatened with violence or imprisonment, according to CPJ research.

January's attacks and intimidation continued through the year. Typical was the June 1 kidnapping of the general secretary of the Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association, Poddala Jayantha. He was abducted on a busy road in Colombo during rush hour, beaten, and dropped by the side of a road in a suburb. Witnesses at the scene said six unidentified men in a white Toyota Hi Ace van with tinted glass windows had grabbed him; the same type of vehicle has been used to pick up antigovernment figures in the past. No arrests had been made by late year.

In July, domestic access to the independent *Lanka News Web* was shut down. The site's managers received no formal explanation but suspected the shutdown stemmed from a story reporting that the president's son had been the target of stone throwers at a Tamil refugee camp. Around the same time, the official Web site of the Ministry of Defense carried an article headlined, "Traitors in Black Coats Flocked Together," which identified five lawyers who represented the *Sunday Leader* newspaper at a July 9 hearing in a Mount Lavinia court as having "a history of appearing for and defending" LTTE guerrillas. The article included pictures of three of the lawyers, making them identifiable to government supporters who might accost them.

CPJ pressed for journalists to be allowed access to the conflict zones. Both the government and the LTTE had barred the press. Reporters who did try to cover the major humanitarian catastrophe taking place in the heart of the Indian Ocean region were obstructed. A team from Britain's Channel 4 News—Asia correspondent Nick Paton Walsh, cameraman Matt Jasper, and producer Bessie Du—were ordered to leave the country on May 10 by Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Channel 4 had just aired footage filmed secretly in a Tamil refugee camp in the northern city of Vavuniya. The report included allegations that guards had left corpses to rot, that food and water were in short supply, and that sexual abuse was prevalent. A month later, on July 20, Associated Press Bureau Chief Ravi Nessman was ordered out the country when the government refused to renew his visa.

By mid-year it was clear that, even with its victory in the war against the LTTE, the government was not going to back away from its policies of intimidation. That reality was driven home on August 31, when columnist J.S. Tissainayagam, also known as Tissa, was sentenced to 20 years in prison on charges of violating the country's harsh anti-terror law. After his conviction, the first in

which a journalist was found guilty of violating the country's Prevention of Terrorism Act, a Colombo High Court sentenced him to 20 years of hard labor.

Terrorism Investigation Division officials arrested Tissainayagam, an English-language columnist for the Sri Lankan *Sunday Times* and editor of the news Web site *OutreachSL*, on March 7, 2008, when he visited their offices to inquire about the arrests of colleagues the previous day. He was held without charge until his indictment in August 2008 in connection with articles published nearly three years earlier in a now-defunct magazine, *North Eastern Monthly*. The sentencing judge, Deepali Wijesundara, said articles Tissainayagam wrote for the *Monthly* in 2006 incited communal disharmony, an offense under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. She also found him guilty of raising funds to publish the magazine, itself a violation of the anti-terror law.

The government had backed off the anti-terror law in 2006 when, under a cease-fire then in effect between the government and the LTTE, it pledged not to detain people under the statute. But as the government ramped up its military efforts, it began enforcing provisions of the law to rein in uncooperative media.

In November, CPJ recognized Tissainayagam's independent journalism, practiced under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, by honoring him with an International Press Freedom Award.

THAILAND

THAI MEDIA WERE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A POLITICAL CONFLICT that entered its fourth year of destabilizing antigovernment street demonstrations and tough government responses. Both sides in the conflict—supporters and opponents of exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra—threatened journalists, some of whom were openly aligned to factions taking part in the protest movements.

On April 12, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva's government declared a state of emergency, a decree that gave authorities the legal power to censor news considered a threat to national security. The red shirt-wearing United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD), an antigovernment group that aimed to restore Thaksin to power, had upped the ante by blockading traffic in the capital, Bangkok, disrupting an Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit meeting, and clashing violently with security forces.

The day after declaring a state of emergency, the government blocked the UDD-aligned satellite news broadcaster D Station, which had run live broadcasts of the UDD's protests. Thaksin had been making frequent video-link calls

to D Station from exile in Dubai in which he frequently urged his supporters to overthrow Abhisit's government in a "people's revolution." The government, citing national security, moved to shut the station under the Internal Security Act.

Prime Minister's Office Minister Sathit Wongnongtoey ordered local satellite provider Thaicom to cut D Station's signal, and police raided the station's offices atop a shopping mall in Bangkok's gritty Lad Phrao district. Sathit told local reporters that D Station was targeted because it was "capable of causing chaos." The government also ordered three provincial community radio stations to close and blocked 71 Web sites the government saw as aligned with Thaksin. All were allowed to resume operations when the state of emergency was lifted later that month.

UDD protesters also moved against the media, threatening journalists from private and state-run news sources whom they perceived as unsympathetic to their cause. Coinciding with their ramped-up street protests in Bangkok, the UDD

staged demonstrations in front of several offices of Channel 11, operated by the government-run National Broadcasting Services of Thailand. In several north-eastern provinces, Channel 11 station managers were forced at times to stop their broadcasts.

On April 8, UDD protesters in Bangkok hurled bottles and spat at reporters from television channels 3

and 7 for what they said was underreporting of the number of protesters attending a mass rally staged by the UDD near Government House. Red-shirted protesters surrounded Channel 3's mobile broadcast unit and, threatening violence, forced reporters to take sanctuary in a nearby Buddhist temple, according to the English-language daily *The Nation*.

The next day, a UDD supporter threw a homemade explosive device near the offices of Asia Satellite Television (ASTV), a news station aligned with the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) protest movement that, since 2005, has campaigned against Thaksin-led or -aligned governments. Nobody was hurt in the attack. Police initially apprehended a suspect but were forced to release him after they were surrounded by UDD protesters, according to *The Nation*.

When troops clashed with protesters on April 13, local and foreign media

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Amid partisan conflict, media owner is target of failed assassination.
- » Heavily used *lese majeste* laws criminalize criticism of royal family.

KEY STATISTIC

2,000 Web sites blocked by the government for violating *lese majeste* laws.

were free to cover the melee. State media reported there were no deaths in the clash, although more than 100 were reported injured. UDD leaders in Bangkok, and Thaksin from exile, claimed in interviews with the BBC and CNN that many protesters had been shot, killed, and hauled away in military trucks, and that state-run television stations were complicit in a government cover-up.

International media and wire service coverage of the clash, however, did not corroborate the assertions of Thaksin and the UDD. Minister Sathit told local media in the aftermath of the crackdown that the government had established a “war room” to counter Thaksin’s claims to foreign media and was “watching some sections of the foreign media” and would identify foreign reporters who had “damaged the country.”

In a violent escalation, the media owner, ASTV television commentator, and PAD co-leader Sondhi Limthongkul was targeted for assassination April 17 as he traveled to his morning television program. Two assailants forcibly stopped Sondhi’s vehicle and fired more than 50 rounds during the pre-dawn attack. Sondhi survived but underwent emergency surgery to remove bullet fragments from his skull and shoulder.

Arrest warrants were issued for two suspects—Army Sgt. Maj. Panya Srihera, a non-commissioned officer at a Special Warfare Unit, and Police Cpl. Worawut Mungsanti—but they had not been served by late year. Deputy National Police Chief Pol Thanee Somboonsap told reporters that the investigation had been hindered by threats to investigating officers, and by police officials who “act like spies” and leak information.

Thailand’s monarchy was drawn deeper into the country’s political conflict as concerns arose about 81-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s declining health and an uncertain royal succession. Both sides to the power struggle professed loyalty to the crown. Reporters, bloggers, academics, and Internet users all came under fire through the expanded use of *lese majeste* (injured majesty) and other related laws that criminalize criticism of the Thai royal family. Thailand’s *lese majeste* laws are among the harshest in the world, allowing for jail terms of three to 15 years for guilty convictions.

Justice Minister Piraphan Salirathavibhaga told reporters that he would consider toughening criminal penalties for publishing online material critical of the royal family. The Ministry of Information and Communications Technology claimed in mid-year to have blocked more than 2,000 Web sites and 8,300 Web pages, including popular message boards, because they allegedly violated *lese majeste* laws.

Former journalist and UDD activist Daranee Charnchoengsilpakul was convicted in August on three counts of *lese majeste* and sentenced to 18 years in prison for anti-royal comments made during a public protest in 2007. Suwicha

Thakor, an oil rig engineer, was convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison under the 2007 Computer Crimes Act for sending pictures over the Internet that pilloried King Bhumibol Adulyadej and heir apparent Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn. Suwicha’s sentence was commuted to 10 years after he pleaded guilty.

On March 6, a group of Crime Suppression Division police officials raided the offices and arrested the executive director of the popular online news site *Prachatai*. Chiranuch Premchaiporn was detained and interrogated by police officials for several hours before being released on bail. She was charged in April under national security-related Article 15 of the 2007 Computer Crime Act, which effectively extended the crime of *lese majeste* to the Internet, for postings made to a *Prachatai* discussion board critical of Queen Sirikit. Chiranuch was forced to reveal the poster’s identity and faced a possible 50 years in prison on various charges, according to press reports. The complaints were still under police investigation in late year.

Foreign correspondents and publications also came under threat. BBC correspondent Jonathan Head faced three separate *lese majeste* complaints filed by Police Lt. Col. Wattanasak Mungkandee, who alleged Head’s reporting and public comments were critical of the monarchy. Senior BBC editors held meetings in February with Prime Minister Abhisit and former royalist premier Anand Panvarachun to seek a resolution to the complaints. Head was reassigned to Turkey in July. The complaints were still pending in late year.

In January, July, and October, local distributors blocked editions of the U.K.-based magazine *The Economist* from entering the country because of articles commenting on the royal family and the increased use of *lese majeste* laws. In December 2008, distributors blocked another edition of the magazine that included pointed criticism of Bhumibol’s rule of more than six decades.

On June 30, Laksana Kornsilpa, a private citizen and supporter of PAD causes, filed a *lese majeste* complaint against board members of the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand. In her complaint, she claimed the club violated *lese majeste* laws by selling DVD copies of a 2007 speech at the club that touched on the monarchy. The speech had been given by former journalist, government spokesman, and UDD co-leader Jakrapob Penkair.

CPJ sent a letter in January urging Abhisit to consider amending the country’s *lese majeste* laws. A similar letter signed by a group of 50 prominent international scholars and dignitaries addressed to the prime minister and released at the Foreign Correspondents Club in March also urged the government to reform the country’s anti-crown laws. In meetings with journalists, Abhisit acknowledged “problems” with enforcement of the laws. No immediate action was taken to change the laws.

VIETNAM

WHILE MAINTAINING ITS TIGHT GRIP ON TRADITIONAL NEWS MEDIA, the government intensified its already significant controls over the Internet with new restrictions on content and heightened monitoring of the blogs that have emerged as an alternative source of news and commentary. Internet penetration continued to surge, with an estimated 22 million users among the country's approximately 89 million people, according to Ministry of Information and Telecommunications statistics.

Of those, the government estimated that as many as 2 million users maintained blogs of various types. The surge in blogging posed a dilemma for the authoritarian government: It sought to promote Internet access to modernize the economy while maintaining strict restrictions on freedom of expression, especially criticism of top-ranking Communist Party leaders or discussion of sensitive government policies.

Many traditional journalists also maintained blogs to publish news and commentary censored by their state-controlled newspapers. Online reporters and bloggers who posted articles critical of bilateral relations with neighboring China were singled out for harassment, interrogation, and temporary detention. Growing commercial and diplomatic ties with China were increasingly sensitive in Vietnam in light of the neighboring countries' often antagonistic history.

On August 27, police detained political blogger Bui Thanh Hieu, known online as Nguoi Buon Gio (or "Wind Trader"), over entries critical of Vietnam's unresolved territorial disputes with China, including the long-contested Paracel and Spratly islands. Hieu also posted material concerning what he considered the government's heavy-handed management of land disputes with the Roman Catholic Church. According to the Free Journalists Network of Vietnam (FJNV), an independent press freedom advocacy group, police searched Hieu's house during his arrest and confiscated two computers and other personal belongings. He was detained for more than a week.

Pham Doan Trang, a reporter with the popular online news site *VietnamNet* and a blogger under the name "Trang the Ridiculous," was detained on August

28 on allegations of violating national security laws. Trang had also reported on sensitive territorial disputes between China and Vietnam, a news story tightly controlled in the state-run media. The Associated Press reported that access to several of Trang's articles on China-related topics and other issues was blocked by the government after her arrest. On her politically oriented blog, she frequently mocked senior party members' public speeches. She was released without charge after a week in police detention.

Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, a blogger who wrote as Me Nam ("Mother Mushroom"), was detained for her online postings. As many as 17 police officials stormed her residence around midnight outside the southern coastal city of Nha Trang. Authorities seized her computer, hard drive, and other belongings during her arrest, according to FJNV. Quynh had posted blog entries on sensitive topics concerning China-Vietnam relations, including a controversial bauxite mining project led by Chinese investors in the country's Central Highlands as well as territorial disputes. Quynh was released after a week in detention after agreeing to stop updating her blog. She faced potential charges of "abusing democratic freedoms to infringe on the interests of the state," a crime punishable by prison terms under the penal code's Article 258.

A blogger who wrote as "Sphinx" was detained by authorities on August 29 and released four days later. According to FJNV, he was subjected to sleep deprivation during interrogations over his short and sometimes witty blog posts that touched on Vietnam-China relations. He had also posted pictures of himself wearing a T-shirt saying "Paracel and Spratly islands belong to Vietnam." While in detention, a group of his associates anonymously updated his widely read blog.

In May, CPJ ranked Vietnam among the 10 Worst Countries to Be a Blogger, a characterization the government took issue with in comments in the state-controlled media. CPJ based its assessment on the government's extension of traditional media restrictions to the blogosphere, and the continued detention of blogger Nguyen Van Hai, also known as Dieu Cay, who was sentenced to 30 months in prison in 2008 on tax evasion charges that his supporters say were trumped up.

In October, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution calling on the government to release imprisoned bloggers and respect Internet freedom. Vietnamese government spokeswoman Nguyen Phuong Nga said the resolution was "unbiased and untrue" and that "in Vietnam, no one is arrested, detained, or tried for expressing their views," according to news reports.

The online crackdown also drew critical attention to the state-run Administration Agency for Radio, Television, and Electronics Information, a new body created in October 2008 to monitor the Internet and blogosphere. According to CPJ sources, the Vietnamese police also maintained their own separate Internet

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Bloggers face regular harassment and detention.
- » Government conducts extensive online censorship.

KEY STATISTIC

300 Number of cybercafés outfitted with software tracking visits to banned Web sites.

surveillance unit. The government maintained blocks on Web sites, mainly Vietnamese-language ones, including those belonging to opposition political parties, including the exile-run Viet Tan, and other pro-democracy and human rights organizations.

According to OpenNet Initiative, a research project on Internet censorship, Vietnam maintained “pervasive filtering practices” and, along with Burma and China, “continued to block content with the greatest breadth and depth” among Asian nations.

Internet traffic was monitored by authorities at the international Internet gateways into Vietnam that are operated by the country’s 15 or so private and government-run Internet service providers, according to a CPJ source familiar with the government’s monitoring techniques. Privately and publicly managed Internet cafés, which in recent years have proliferated in Vietnam’s major urban areas, were required to check and record photo identification and store information about their customers’ online activities.

To intensify that surveillance, the government’s telecommunications and media department installed in 300 Internet cafés in Hanoi new software designed to record and send reports to officials when users visited unsanctioned Web sites. According to local news reports, department director Pham Quoc Ban said in October that once the software was successfully tested, it would be extended to 3,000 more cafés across the city.

On August 19, bloggers took another hit with the closing of Yahoo’s 360° blog service, a platform that was immensely popular among Vietnam’s bloggers, partially because it maintained its servers outside the country, in Singapore. Yahoo launched a new blogging service, 360° Plus, with servers inside Vietnam. Bloggers concerned about maintaining anonymity moved to other foreign-hosted platforms, including WordPress and Blogspot, as well as social networking sites Facebook and Multiply. Facebook became inaccessible to many in late year, according to widespread reports, but the government denied involvement.

According to *VietnamNet*, Yahoo Vietnam’s director, Vu Minh Tri, said the decision to close the 360° service was part of the company’s plan to restructure and “Vietnamize” its services and fix errors that occurred with the format. The decision came after Deputy Minister of Information and Communication Do Quy Doan said that his ministry would seek the assistance of Google and Yahoo to “regulate” the content of blogs and Web sites, according to an Agence France-Presse report that quoted the Vietnamese-language *Thanh Nien* daily newspaper.

(Yahoo is a member of the Global Network Initiative, a consortium of technology companies, academics, and free expression groups, including CPJ, to address issues of corporate responsibility when dealing with censorious governments.)

A December 2008 Information Ministry directive aimed to bring online media under the same censorship regime imposed on the traditional media. The circular broadly banned blogs from posting “reactionary information that damaged national security, social safety and the people’s solidarity.” It also barred bloggers from posting “secrets relating to the state, military, security, economy, and foreign affairs.” The circular also required ISPs to build databases on individual blogs for government surveillance purposes.

The government maintained strict control over the mainstream media. That included Monday meetings between Information Ministry officials and local newspaper editors to go over what stories were off-limits for the week. Editors were expected to self-censor their publications and shy from reporting critically on top ministers and central policies, according to the source.

Editors and reporters who fell out of step with those orders were treated severely. On January 2, the government ordered the dismissal of two senior newspaper journalists, Nguyen Cong Khe, editor of the daily *Thanh Nien* (Young People), and Le Hoang, editor of *Tuoi Tre* (Youth). Their dismissals came months after their respective publications were found guilty by a Vietnamese court in 2008 of “abusing democratic freedoms” in connection with their reporting on a government corruption scandal involving former Transport Minister Dao Dinh Binh and World Bank funds. *Thanh Nien* reporter Nguyen Viet Chien, who led the way in breaking the story, was sentenced to two years in prison in 2008. He was freed by a presidential pardon on January 17.

SNAPSHOTS

ATTACKS & DEVELOPMENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

BANGLADESH

- » India's Border Security Force detained Shahidul Alam, chief editor of the Bangladesh-based photo agency DrikNEWS, on June 16 in Kurigram district on charges of illegally crossing Bangladesh's northern border, according to local news reports. Alam, an internationally known photojournalist who served on the advisory board of the National Geographic Society, told local journalists that Indian officials had lured him across the border. Alam was transferred after six hours to Bangladesh, where a local court charged him with illegally entering India. He was granted bail, and the charges were later dropped.
- » On September 10, unidentified gunmen shot computer technician Hasan Chowdhury in the offices of *Fulki*, a newspaper in Savar, Dhaka district. Chowdhury suffered serious injuries to the abdomen. On September 16, a man claiming to be a leader of a local criminal gang telephoned *Fulki* Editor Nazmus Shakib and said he had carried out the attack on behalf of an unnamed "influential quarter." Local press freedom groups, including the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, said the shooting was part of a pattern of criminal attacks targeting critical newspapers.

CAMBODIA

- » A Cambodian court sentenced Hang Chakra, editor-in-chief of the opposition Khmer-language daily *Khmer Machas Srok*, to one year in prison on June 26 for his reports on alleged government corruption. The court said Chakra had violated criminal disinformation laws by publishing a series of articles accusing officials under Deputy Prime Minister Sok An of corruption, according to the South East Asian Press Alliance. He was also fined 9 million riels (US\$2,194), the alliance said. A three-judge appellate panel upheld the sentence on August 11, the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Asia reported. Chakra apologized for the articles in September, local news reports said, but he remained in jail.
- » In September, a court in Phnom Penh fined *Cambodian Daily* Editor-in-Chief Kevin Doyle, an Irish national, and reporter Neou Vannarin 4 million riels (US\$960) apiece, according to Radio Free Asia. The two had been found

liable in a civil defamation case stemming from an April report quoting opposition leader Ho Vann as being critical of certification earned by Cambodian military officials after a yearlong program in Vietnam. Several officials with close ties to Prime Minister Hun Sen had received the certification. Ho Vann later claimed that he had been misquoted in the *Daily* report.

FIJI

- » Fiji's interim government declared a state of emergency on April 10, overthrowing the constitution and imposing severe reporting restrictions, after a court of appeal called caretaker Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama's military rule illegal. The emergency regulations, repeatedly extended and still in effect in late year, banned "negative" reports about the military regime. Government officers were stationed in newsrooms with authority over content, according to international news reports. Bainimarama had promised to restore democracy in 2009 after toppling the former government in a 2006 coup, but he has deferred elections until 2014.
- » Officials expelled Sean Dorney, Pacific correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and Sia Aston and Matt Smith of New Zealand's TV3 television station, in April because of their reporting on the wave of censorship, according to news accounts. Two journalists who reported on Dorney's expulsion were themselves detained, according to the Pacific Freedom Forum, a press freedom group, and local Web sites. Authorities held Fiji Television journalist Edwin Nand for 36 hours, and freelancer Pita Ligaiula, who worked for news outlets including The Associated Press and the regional news agency PACNEWS, for 24 hours.

INDIA

- » Karnataka State Police arrested B.V. Seetaram, chairman and editor-in-chief of the media group Chitra Publications, and his wife, Rohini, the group's director, in the state's Udupi district on January 4. The arrests were connected to two-year-old criminal charges of offending a religious group, filed against Chitra's Kannada-language newspapers, *Karavali Ale* and *Kannada Jananataranga*, according to local news reports. Seetaram said the detentions were part of a campaign of harassment against *Karavali Ale* for reports criticizing local authorities, according to news reports. The couple were freed on February 3 and the Karnataka High Court later awarded them damages for illegal arrest, the reports said.

- » Police detained Ravindra Kumar, editor of the Calcutta-based daily *The Statesman*, and Anand Sinha, its publisher, on February 11 and charged them under the penal code with “outraging religious feelings” after complaints by local Muslim groups, local and international news reports said. The newspaper had republished an article from the British newspaper *The Independent* that asked in the headline: “Why Should I Respect These Oppressive Religions?” The two men were released on bail February 25, according to the newspaper’s Web site. The case was pending in late year.
- » Political activists for the Trinamool Congress party attacked freelance photographer Jay Mandal on May 5 while he was covering an election rally in Nandigram in the state of West Bengal, the New York-based South Asian Journalists Association (SAJA) reported. The attackers struck Mandal, smashed his camera equipment, and confiscated his memory cards, the photographer told SAJA.
- » Police in Lalgarh, Bengal, beat at least seven photographers in two separate episodes on June 18 while they were covering a paramilitary offensive to break a four-day siege by Maoist insurgents, according to local news reports. Security forces beat Sanat Kumar of *The Telegraph* in one attack. Shubham Datta, principal photographer of *The Indian Express*, and at least five colleagues were assaulted in the other, according to local reports. They sustained minor injuries.
- » Assailants stormed the offices of the Kannada-language daily *Samyukta Karnataka* in Gulbarga, southern Karnataka state, on July 31, according to local news reports. About 15 attackers seriously injured three employees, including the daily’s circulation manager, Vilas Deshpande, who was admitted to the hospital. News reports said attackers were protesting the paper’s “vulgar words” and “indecent allegations” about an official with a local Sufi shrine.
- » Members of the Hindu nationalist political party Shiv Sena attacked two IBN TV network channels in Maharashtra state on November 20, according to local and international news reports. The groups, armed with iron rods and baseball bats, smashed windows and furniture in the offices of Marathi-language IBN Lokmat in Mumbai, and vans belonging to Hindi-language IBN7 in the nearby city of Pune, saying the channels had been “too critical” of Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray. Several journalists and staff sustained minor injuries and two were hospitalized, news reports said. Police made seven arrests in Mumbai and eight in Pune but were looking for at least 15 other suspects, according to the reports. Shiv Sena denied planning the assault but did not condemn it, the reports said.

INDONESIA

- » Anak Agung Prabangsa, 41, a reporter for the Indonesian-language *Radar Bali* daily, was murdered in February on the island of Bali, according to local news reports. Police arrested a local politician and several alleged accomplices in the killing, which they said was motivated by the reporter’s coverage of a local government project, news accounts said. Police alleged that I. Nyoman Susrama, a legislative council member, and others abducted Prabangsa from his home and later dumped him in the sea, *The Jakarta Globe* reported. Prabangsa’s reporting had alleged corruption in a local education department project under Susrama’s jurisdiction, according to the Alliance of Independent Journalists in Indonesia. Court proceedings were pending in late year.

MALAYSIA

- » Police arrested Law Tech Hao, editor of *Suara Keadilan*, and Josh Hong, a political columnist for the online news service Malaysiakini, on May 6 while they were covering a candlelight vigil for detained writer Wong Chin Huat outside a Kuala Lumpur police station, according to the local Centre for Independent Journalism. Wong, a writer, academic, and chairman of the local Writer’s Alliance for Media Independence, was among more than 80 people arrested for opposing the ruling party’s efforts to regain control of the state legislative assembly in the northern state of Perak, according to international news reports. The party lost the state in 2008 general elections but later secured a majority after several opposition politicians defected, local reports said. Both reporters were released without charge after several hours in custody.
- » The news Web site *Malaysiakini* in September defied a government order to remove two videos about a dispute between Muslims and minority Hindus over the relocation of a Hindu temple in Kuala Lumpur. The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission had called the videos “provocative” and in violation of the country’s 1998 Communication and Multimedia Act. Muslim protesters were shown delivering the severed head of a cow—sacred to Hindus—to a government office in the first clip, filmed by *Malaysiakini* reporters. The second recorded Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein describing the protesters as “victims” in a September 2 press conference. The commission launched an investigation of the site after its refusal, but no further measures were announced, according to international news reports.

SINGAPORE

- » A three-member Court of Appeal upheld a 2008 ruling that the *Far Eastern Economic Review* had defamed Singapore's founder, Lee Kuan Yew, and his son, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, in a 2006 article that touched on the country's record of politicized defamation cases. Damages were set at \$200,000 plus \$30,000 in legal fees. The Lees have won hundreds of thousands of dollars in damages or out-of-court settlements from legal actions against foreign publications, according to CPJ research. Dow Jones, the 63-year-old magazine's owner, announced in September that it would close the *Review* in December 2009 due to losses in advertising revenue.

SOUTH KOREA

- » In April, a Seoul court acquitted Park Dae-sung, who used the name Minerva to make financial predictions on the Web site *Daum*, on a charge of "spreading false information with the intent of harming the public interest." The government took issue with a claim, made by Park in a December 2008 posting, that it was trying to dissuade local bankers from buying U.S. dollars. Authorities had wanted an 18-month jail term.
- » Authorities indicted four producers and a staff writer for the current affairs television program "PD Notebook" in June on charges of defaming the former agriculture minister and disrupting U.S. beef imports in an April 2008 broadcast, according to local news reports. The show alleged that U.S. beef had spread mad cow disease in humans, a report that sparked public outcry. The meat importing firm A Meat sued the show's network, Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation, in August, seeking 300 million won (\$260,000) in damages for lost business.



EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Who is left to report on human rights abuses in Chechnya? The murder of one reporter has a resounding global impact. It also illustrates the grave problem of impunity.

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Section break: AP/Sergey Ponomarev—A mourner holds a portrait of slain journalist Natalya Estemirova during a vigil in Moscow. Analysis: RIA Novosti—Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov confers with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in Grozny.

WHY A KILLING IN CHECHNYA IS AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

BY NINA OGNIANOVA

THE DAY BEFORE, NATALYA ESTEMIROVA HAD SEEN OFF TWO colleagues from Moscow. Yelena Milashina, a reporter with the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, and Tanya Lokshina, an advocate with the international group Human Rights Watch, had traveled to Chechnya on separate assignments. Like many visiting journalists and human rights defenders, Milashina and Lokshina had stayed with Estemirova. Her Grozny apartment had become a headquarters for such visitors; Russian and international journalists often made it their first stop. Estemirova was their primary source, consultant, fixer, translator, protector.

Estemirova was to travel to Moscow shortly, Milashina recalled later, so on July 14, 2009, the friends said goodbye with the words: "I'll see you soon."

The next morning, as Estemirova was leaving for work, four men forced her into a white Lada sedan. She cried out that she was being kidnapped, but the car sped off. Her body, three bullets to the chest, two to the head, was found eight hours later, ditched along a road near the village of Gazi-Yurt in neighboring Ingushetia. Witnesses saw the kidnappers, according to news reports, but they were too afraid to speak. Despite ostensibly tight security along the Chechnya-Ingushetia border, the kidnappers passed through guarded checkpoints undisturbed.



A terrible, terrible thing, but, really, what makes this death so important? After all, tens of thousands have been killed in Chechnya over 15 brutal years of separatist conflict. Why should this murder be an international issue?

Estemirova, 50, was one of the few expert witnesses to the human toll in Chechnya. Writing for *Novaya Gazeta* and the news Web site *Kavkazsky Uzel*, and reporting for Human Rights Watch and the Russian rights group Memorial, she had accumulated a damning body of evidence linking torture, disappearances, murders, arsons, and punitive violence to Chechen authorities and, particularly, to the militia of Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov.

ONE REPORTER ASKS: WHO IS STILL WILLING TO CHRONICLE CHECHNYA'S HORRORS?

“A question hangs over her execution, the most recent in a series of killings of those still willing to chronicle Chechnya’s horrors,” wrote *New York Times* reporter C.J. Chivers, who said Estemirova had helped him on many stories. “Is the accounting of the human toll now over? Without her, will Chechnya become, like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, a place where no one risks asking hard questions openly?”

Estemirova is among 19 journalists murdered in retaliation for their work in Russia since 2000, CPJ research shows. Murder convictions have been won in only one case and, even there, the masterminds have evaded punishment. In September, a CPJ delegation traveled to Moscow to issue a report, *Anatomy of Injustice*, that examined Russia’s failure to solve journalist murders. In Moscow, we met with government officials and top investigators to discuss our findings and seek their commitment to bringing thorough, independent prosecutions.

While our meetings did not produce breaking news, we left with the sense that at least some officials recognized the need to reverse this record of impunity. Their expressed commitment to collaborate with international partners—as they pledged to do in the case of slain U.S. editor Paul Klebnikov—was an encouraging note. Officials with the Russian Investigative Committee, the law enforcement arm of the Prosecutor General’s office, agreed to meet with CPJ in 2010 to update their progress in these unsolved murders.

But great skepticism is warranted. Throughout the decade, Kremlin and regional authorities have sought to obstruct, marginalize, and demean their critics. Probing journalists have been effectively banned from influential federal television channels—the main news source for most Russians—and pushed to limited-audience print and Internet publications. These journalists are vulnerable to attack given their isolation and the official hostility to their work. This culture has caused extensive damage: Coverage of important topics such as corruption, human rights

abuses, and organized crime goes largely unnoticed by the public. Impunity in attacks on journalists induces further self-censorship among colleagues.

CPJ research has shown that justice has been thwarted by systemic shortcomings at every level—political, investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial. Investigations of the murders of journalists have been consistently opaque, often compromised by internal conflicts of interest, and frequently subjected to undue political influence. Take the case of Maksim Maksimov, a St. Petersburg reporter who was investigating corruption in the local Interior Ministry when he disappeared in June 2004. In the hands of the same local authorities Maksimov had been examining, the murder probe went nowhere. Investigators made no evident effort to follow up on allegations that local officers themselves were involved in Maksimov’s disappearance.

Time and again, CPJ research shows, investigators failed to pursue work-related motives. In the few cases that reached the courts, prosecutors brought weak or even bogus cases to trial. In the corruption-ridden city of Togliatti, for instance, investigators ignored journalism-related motives in the killings of Valery Ivanov and Aleksei Sidorov, consecutive

editors of the muckraking newspaper *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye*. After coercing a confession, prosecutors tried an innocent man in the murder of Sidorov. The man was acquitted, and the case is unsolved.

At times, important evidence has been lost or concealed. *Novaya Gazeta* editor Yuri Shchekochikhin died in 2003 from a rare dermatological condition that struck as he was investigating a high-level corruption scheme. Officials at the government-run clinic where the journalist had been treated sealed the medical records, calling them a state secret. The records, eventually given to a Moscow prosecutor, then vanished.

INVESTIGATIONS ARE COMPROMISED BY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE.

A historian by education and a Chechen-Russian by descent, Estemirova possessed the intellectual rigor to methodically document facts and the innate drive to fight injustice. Living under a regime that represses women, she wore heels and red lipstick and looked men straight in the eye. In a profile published three days after her death, *The Times’* Chivers described the importance of her work: “To the families whose pain she worked to relieve and whose stories she forced the world to see, she was a resolute champion. To the men whose crimes she exposed, case by case, with a quiet composure, she was a confounding enemy, a feminine nemesis they could neither fathom nor dissuade.”

Apart from her own reporting on dangerous assignments, Estemirova was a go-to person for outside journalists and human rights defenders. “This loss is absolutely irreplaceable, not only for us, her friends, but for [Russian] society and for the world. Because if it weren’t for Natasha, nobody would know what really goes on in Chechnya,” Lokshina told the Russian service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Lokshina, who had just collaborated with Estemirova on a report documenting punitive house burnings by Chechen law enforcement, went on to say: “Of course there are people living in Moscow and abroad who try to cover Chechnya, but even if they travel to the region, they are still tourists. ... Natasha lived there, she was in the epicenter of events, and she guided us.”

Her murder immediately crippled reporting in Chechnya. The Grozny branch of Memorial, which Estemirova headed, halted activities for nearly six months, while *Novaya Gazeta* announced it would indefinitely suspend trips to Chechnya because it could not ensure the safety of its reporters. In microcosm, the impact of Estemirova’s murder reflects the chilling effect that impunity has had on media coverage overall in Russia.

International groups were also harmed by the killing. Her reports for Memorial were regularly used by the United Nations and the Council of Europe, for instance, in preparing their own human rights strategies with regard to Chechnya and the North Caucasus, Lokshina told CPJ.

Estemirova’s colleagues believe she was killed in retaliation for her documentation of official abuses in Chechnya. Authorities, including Kadyrov, had repeatedly summoned her to “meetings” intended to threaten and intimidate her into stopping her work, according to colleagues and news reports. At one such meeting, in March 2008, Kadyrov asked Estemirova a series of questions about her personal life and family, including her teenage daughter. Kadyrov told Estemirova that day: “Yes, my arms are in blood up to my elbows. And I am not ashamed of it. I killed and will kill bad people. We are fighting the enemies of the people,” Human Rights Watch reported. Estemirova’s daughter was relocated after that meeting; the journalist herself took brief trips away from home.

But, as always, she returned to her work. A July 17, 2009, *New York Times* report said that Estemirova had been summoned three months earlier for questioning by Chechen police, “an incident that so worried her co-workers at Memorial that they reported it to the Council of Europe.” The *Times* also noted a meeting between Estemirova’s Moscow-based Memorial supervisor, Oleg Orlov,

and Nurdi Nukhazhiyev, the pro-Kadyrov Chechen human rights ombudsman. Speaking five days before Estemirova was killed, according to the account, Nukhazhiyev told Orlov that high-ranking officials were “extremely dissatisfied” with Memorial’s most recent investigations.

Although President Dmitry Medvedev condemned the killing, Kadyrov’s reaction left reason to believe that justice would not be served. Immediately af-

**THE CHECHEN PRESIDENT
CALLED ESTEMIROVA
‘A WOMAN NO ONE NEEDS.’**

ter the murder, Kadyrov said he was taking the investigation “under personal control” and declared the killers “deserve no support and must be punished as the cruelest of criminals,” the

news agency Interfax reported. He sent a different message a month later, in an interview with the Russian service of RFE/RL. Responding to a suggestion that independent, outside investigators might be better suited to handle the probe, Kadyrov told RFE/RL: “If the law works here, why should we invite outside people? ... If Kadyrov is guilty, if Kadyrov’s people are guilty, let it be proved.

“Why would Kadyrov murder a woman who no one needs?” he asked. “She never had any dignity, honor, conscience.” Kadyrov went on to file a defamation lawsuit against Memorial’s Orlov, who had publicly accused the Chechen president of involvement in Estemirova’s kidnapping and murder.

In her 10 years of reporting on the Second Chechen War, Estemirova documented and publicized human rights abuses by all parties in the conflict, including the separatists. Her work could have provided a number of parties with motive to kill. But can an independent investigation truly be conducted by Chechen authorities when its iron-fisted president says “no one needs” the victim? Can anyone really believe local investigators have the freedom to examine work-related motives, including Estemirova’s reporting on official human rights abuses? CPJ and others have called on the federal-level Prosecutor General’s Office headed by Yuri Chaika and the Investigative Committee headed by Aleksandr Bastrykin to assign the case to independent detectives from outside the North Caucasus region, and to require regular progress reports from them.

Fundamental steps can be taken in the other, failed probes. Closed investigations must be reopened; investigations that are open in name but stalled in practical terms must be restarted. Under Russia’s centralized law enforcement system, federal officials in Moscow have the ultimate practical responsibility for solving journalist murders; they must demand specific progress reports from their subordinates at the district and regional levels. Russia’s top leaders, President Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, share the moral responsibility for Russia’s impunity record; they must hold their appointees accountable for progress in journalist killings. Medvedev and Putin should also publicly

state their recognition of the important role independent news-gatherers, investigative reporters, and critical commentators play in Russia's society.

Although extreme in its animosity, Kadyrov's reaction to the Estemirova murder was similar to the views expressed by other Russian officials in response to earlier media killings: Broadly promise to investigate, but diminish the crime, marginalize the victim, and dismiss the possibility of official involvement. Even as he pledged an investigation into the 2006 killing of *Novaya Gazeta* reporter Anna Politkovskaya, then-President Putin called her work "insignificant" and said he could not "imagine that anybody currently in office could come to the idea of organizing such a brutal crime."

Politkovskaya, like Estemirova, had devoted her career to documenting human rights crimes in Chechnya. She was threatened, jailed, forced into exile, and poisoned, CPJ research shows. Her last story, published after her death, detailed the alleged torture of Chechen civilians by military units loyal to Kadyrov. The slaying of Politkovskaya in her Moscow apartment building remains unsolved.

The international community has a clear interest in fighting impunity in the Estemirova case and in all Russian journalist killings. Without reporters uncovering facts about human rights abuses, politics, crime, and corruption, those sensitive issues are concealed from the world. A closed society cannot be regarded as a reliable neighbor and partner in the community of free, democratic nations.

While in Moscow, CPJ heard a resounding message—from victims' families, colleagues, and press freedom advocates—that international attention to Russian journalists at risk can help prevent recurring attacks. "Journalists are always more protected when their fates are monitored from abroad," said Musa Muradov, a

**OFFICIALS PROMISE
TO INVESTIGATE, BUT
DIMINISH THE CRIME AND
MARGINALIZE THE VICTIM.**

North Caucasus correspondent for the business daily *Kommersant* and a 2003 recipient of CPJ's International Press Freedom Award. While such monitoring carries no guarantees, he added, "to a certain extent, it can save us."

Veteran press freedom advocates Aleksei Simonov with the Glasnost Defense Foundation and Oleg Panfilov with the Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations—whose organizations regularly document attacks on the press in Russia—told CPJ that international attention is vital in eliciting responses from Russian officials. "If 10 Russian press freedom groups got together and wrote a protest letter to top Kremlin officials, there will be no reaction," Panfilov told CPJ. "Russian authorities only respond to international criticism."

Rimma Maksimova, the mother of the St. Petersburg reporter Maksim Maksimov, also noted the importance of international scrutiny in breaking through a culture of media indifference and public apathy in Russia. "For five years, I have been bumping my head into an impervious wall," she said of her repeated efforts to talk with investigators about her son's case. "No one talks to me, no one responds to my requests for information."

**IMPUNITY EMBOLDENS ENEMIES
OF THE PRESS TO PRACTICE THE
RAWEST FORM OF CENSORSHIP.**

The international community has a number of tools to prod Russian authorities. Through its membership in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the pan-European human rights monitor, and in the Council of Europe, Russia is obligated to comply with principles on freedom of expression outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights. The council should ensure that Russia fully complies with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in freedom of expression cases. In the event that Russia does not comply with its obligations, the council should use penalty mechanisms up to suspension of membership.

Though not a member of the European Union, Russia has partnership agreements with the EU. The two parties regularly hold human rights consultations, known as Human Rights Dialogues, during which press freedom issues are discussed. As part of CPJ's September mission on combating impunity, a delegation traveled to Brussels and met with EU representatives responsible for placing impunity on the EU-Russia agenda for upcoming Human Rights Dialogues. We urged that the EU Mission in Russia monitor press freedom and apply to Russian journalists the EU guidelines on human rights defenders. Under the guidelines, the EU provides official support and resources to human rights defenders. In our meetings with representatives of the European Parliament, we emphasized the need for closer scrutiny of Russia's impunity record through subcommittee hearings.

Attention to Russia's impunity record is also needed from the U.N. Human Rights Council and, in the United States, from the Obama administration and Congress. World leaders must engage their Russian counterparts and seek results at every opportunity. If results are lacking, international monitors should be dispatched to conduct independent, fact-finding missions. Those should end in timely reports with clear, practical recommendations; where violations are proved, international institutions must not shy away from sanctioning Russia.

When the subject of impunity is raised, Russian leaders have often gone on the offensive, demanding the world stop meddling in the country's internal affairs, and suggesting the nation's transition from Soviet collectivism to a modern market economy has been smooth compared to, say, America's Wild West era.

But this is not the Wild West—this is Russia in the 21st century, an influential country claiming an equal seat at the table of global leaders. In a world more interconnected and interdependent than ever, that seat comes with a portfolio of privileges and obligations.

The need to address the issue is urgent. Impunity emboldens enemies of the press to continue practicing the rawest form of censorship. In Russia, the maxim “No person, no problem” reflects both the philosophy of the murderers and the failure of the justice system to rein them in. It also spells out the vulnerability of Russian journalists who take on risky subjects—like lone soldiers in a battlefield, they make easy targets for elimination. It’s worth remembering that they are fighting for everyone. World leaders in the European Union, in the United Nations, in the U.S. State Department and U.S. Congress are obliged to back them, to press the case with the Kremlin, and to demand President Medvedev and his government stand for the rule of law and on the side of humanity.

Nina Ognianova, CPJ’s Europe and Central Asia program coordinator, led a CPJ mission to Moscow and Brussels in September 2009. She is lead author of CPJ’s September 2009 report, *Anatomy of Injustice*, which examined the unsolved murders of journalists in Russia from 2000 to 2009. CPJ’s Global Campaign Against Impunity is underwritten by the **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**.

ARMENIA

THE NATION REMAINED POLARIZED BY THE FRAUD-MARRED 2008 presidential election won by Serzh Sargsyan, with large public protests and violent government reprisals continuing well into 2009. The global economic crisis caused layoffs in the mining industry and a decline in remittances from Russia, heightening public frustrations. The government sought to suppress critical debate over these issues, and journalists faced intolerance, hostility, and violence.

The government maintained control over most broadcast media, the primary news source in a poverty-afflicted country with poor newspaper distribution and low Internet penetration. The Council on Public Radio and Television, composed of presidential appointees, continued to set editorial guidelines for H1 state television, ensuring the station generated pro-government reports. Most private radio and television stations were owned by politicians and businessmen with close ties to the government, leading to significant self-censorship by journalists and limited critical news reporting on the airwaves, CPJ research showed.

One independent news outlet remained off the air. In February, a Yerevan appellate court dismissed lawsuits filed by the media outlet A1+ that sought reconsideration of its broadcast license applications. The station, pulled from the airwaves in 2002 in reprisal for its critical news reports, has seen a dozen license applications rejected by the government’s broadcast regulator. (A1+ has continued operating as an independent online news agency.) The Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2008 that the regulator violated the European Convention on Human Rights by repeatedly rejecting the applications without explanation.

Country summaries in this chapter were researched and written by Europe and Central Asia Program Coordinator **Nina Ognianova**, Research Associate **Muzaffar Suleymanov**, and freelance writers **Alex Lupis** and **Catherine Fitzpatrick**.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Broadcast media controlled by government or its allies.
- » Numerous assaults reported, but police do little.

KEY STATISTIC

12 Broadcast license applications filed by independent outlet A1+. None approved.

Other forms of government obstruction were reported on a regular basis. In January, bailiffs in a Yerevan court prevented journalists from attending the trial of seven opposition activists charged with illegal participation in 2008 protests, according to local press reports. In August, the police chief in the northwestern city of Gyumri prevented a crew from Shant TV, a private station, from covering protests in front of the mayor's office concerning the closing of a local market, local press reports said. That same month, parliament issued new media accreditation rules that authorized suspensions of journalists whose reports "do not correspond to reality" or that disrespect the "lawful interests, honor, and dignity" of members of parliament, according to local press reports. Parliamentary staff members were given wide discretion to administer the rules.

Violent attacks against journalists continued amid a climate of impunity. On March 13, security guards at the State Linguistics University in Yerevan knocked freelance photographer Gagik Shamshian to the ground and kicked him after he tried to photograph students protesting alleged faculty corruption, according to press reports. Shamshian was hospitalized for six days with internal bleeding. A security guard was briefly questioned by police but was not charged.

In April, three unidentified assailants attacked Argishti Kivirian, editor of the independent news Web site *Armenia Today*, outside his home in Yerevan, according to press reports. The assailants beat him with clubs, leaving the editor hospitalized with a concussion and severe bruising. Kivirian's colleagues and family linked the attack to his professional activities, noting that he had received prior work-related threats. Lusine Sahakaian, a prominent defense lawyer and the editor's wife, criticized police for failing to collect evidence at the crime scene, the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reported. *Armenia Today's* Web site was plagued by denial-of-service attacks throughout the year—including a series of attacks that coincided with the assault on Kivirian.

A third attack also generated no arrests and little evident police investigation. Nver Mnatsakanian, a prominent commentator for Shant TV, was punched and knocked to the ground by two unidentified men as he was walking home in Yerevan on the evening of May 6, according to press reports. Mnatsakanian, who was forced to cancel his show for two days, criticized police for claiming the attack was the result of mistaken identity.

Attacks spiked in May, several of them related to a Yerevan mayoral election that was marred by allegations of fraud. Gohar Vezirian, a reporter for the opposition newspaper *Chorrord Ishkhanutyun*, was beaten by supporters of pro-government candidate Gagik Beglarian after she informed an election commissioner that the candidate's supporters had unlawfully entered a polling station in Yerevan, according to the news Web site *EurasiaNet*. Election officials stood by when pro-government supporters threatened Nelly Gregorian, a reporter for the

independent daily *Aravot*, confiscated her camera and erased photos at a polling station in Yerevan, according to the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR).

Law enforcement officials were either ambivalent or hostile to the press. Col. Hovhannes Tamamian, a senior police investigator, told reporters at a May 8 press conference that police were working hard to arrest assailants in the attacks—but he suggested journalists should arm themselves in defense, according to international press reports. In August, when prosecutors were angered by media criticism of an investigation into the activities of an outspoken environmental activist, a spokesman for the prosecutor general warned journalists that the office "regularly sends publications to police for assessment," IWPR reported. The comment was seen as a veiled threat that journalists would be harassed if they continued reporting on the case.

Arman Babadzhanian, 33, editor of the opposition daily *Zhamanak Yerevan* and a critic of law enforcement officials, was released from prison in August after doctors diagnosed a brain tumor, according to press reports. In 2006, he was sentenced to four years in prison after publishing an article that questioned the independence of the Yerevan prosecutor's office. Babadzhanian had been convicted of forging documents to skirt military service; he did not dispute the allegation, but he and press freedom advocates, including CPJ, said the prosecution was selective and retaliatory. Babadzhanian underwent surgery outside the country and was recovering in late year.

AZERBAIJAN

USING IMPRISONMENT AS A CRUDE FORM OF CENSORSHIP, THE authoritarian government of President Ilham Aliyev remained one of the region's worst jailers of journalists. Authorities allowed one editor to die in state custody after failing to provide adequate medical care and ignoring domestic and international pleas for treatment.

Political dissent and independent voices, already in short supply, came under assault again as Aliyev tightened his grip on the oil-rich Caspian Sea nation. In March, his government brought before voters a constitutional amendment to remove presidential term limits, effectively allowing Aliyev to remain in office for life. The measure, which passed by a wide margin, was criticized by opposition politicians and the international community. Aliyev was elected to a second term in 2008 after electoral laws were changed to restrict participation by opposition politicians. Aliyev effectively inherited the presidency from his father, Heydar, himself leader of Azerbaijan for more than 30 years.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Critical reporters jailed for defamation, “hooliganism.”
- » CPJ honors imprisoned editor Eynulla Fatullayev.

68 KEY STATISTIC
Novruzali Mamedov’s age when he died in prison after being denied medical care.

In January, the BBC and the U.S. government-funded broadcasters Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and Voice of America were forced to halt FM transmissions in response to a National Television and Radio Council decision to ban international stations from domestic frequencies. Radio Azadlyg, the popular Azerbaijani service of RFE/RL,

had become a particularly important alternative news source for citizens. “Although many listeners call us and ask how to listen to the radio via Internet and satellite ... 90 percent of the regular listeners we had before lost access to our information,” Radio Azadlyg Bureau Chief Khadija Ismayilova told the news Web site *EurasiaNet*.

The loss of Radio Azadlyg was significant. Most residents get news from television, which is largely under the administration’s control, either directly or through pro-Aliyev owners, CPJ research shows. The only independent Azerbaijani channel with national reach, ANS, toned down its criticism of the government since regulators suspended its license for five months beginning in November 2006. Low-circulation print media had more editorial freedom, but their impact on public opinion was small. And with authorities cracking down on critical journalists—using criminal defamation charges to demand jail time and high monetary damages—few reporters were willing to cover sensitive topics, the most dangerous of which was reporting on Aliyev and his family.

The state’s intolerance of critical voices reached its lowest, and cruelest, point in August when Novruzali Mamedov, editor of a now-defunct minority newspaper, died in prison, two years into a 10-year sentence on a trumped-up treason charge. A Penitentiary Service spokesman said the 68-year-old Mamedov had suffered a stroke—and the journalist’s lawyer, family, colleagues, and supporters charged that authorities bore responsibility. Mamedov’s health had severely deteriorated in the months before his death, they said, and the editor had repeatedly complained of inadequate medical care. Defense lawyer Ramiz Mamedov (no relation to the journalist) said his client had suffered from hypertension, bronchitis, neuritis, and a prostate tumor, among other ailments.

Authorities refused to release Mamedov on humanitarian grounds or allow independent medical care. The Council of Europe’s representative to Azerbaijan,

Veronika Kotek, unsuccessfully appealed for Mamedov’s transfer to a civilian hospital just days before the death, according to the Baku-based Institute for Reporters’ Freedom and Safety (IRFS). Emin Huseynov, IRFS director, said authorities had also refused to allow medical treatment offered by a European Union delegation that visited Mamedov in June. Mamedov’s family filed a lawsuit against the Azerbaijani Penitentiary Service and officials at Prison No. 15, where the editor had been held. The case was pending in late year.

Arrested in February 2007, Mamedov was convicted the following year after a closed-door trial before Judge Shakir Aleskerov of the Court for Grave Crimes. Authorities never publicly disclosed the evidence against Mamedov, despite protests from domestic and international press freedom groups, including CPJ. News reports said the case against the editor was based on an allegation that he had received money from Iran to publish his newspaper, *Talyshi Sado*, a tiny, twice-weekly publication, whose target audience was Azerbaijan’s ethnic Talysh minority. The Talysh community spans northern Iran and southern Azerbaijan. The paper folded after Mamedov’s arrest.

Mamedov’s death in state custody threw into sharp relief the plight of six other members of the news media who were being held in jail for their work when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census of imprisoned journalists on December 1.

Three journalists—Sakit Zakhidov of the pro-opposition daily *Azadlyg*, Asif Marzili of the independent weekly *Tezadlar*, and Ali Hasanov of the pro-government daily *Ideal*—were granted early release from prison in April under a pardon act passed by parliament the month before. Seeing the amnesty, some analysts expressed hope that the government might ease its heavy-handed repression of the Azerbaijani press corps. Those hopes were soon dashed as the government opened its revolving prison door to four more journalists.

Two were being held on defamation charges, CPJ research showed. In October, Editor-in-Chief Sardar Alibeili and reporter Faramaz Novruzoglu of the weekly newspaper *Nota* were given three-month prison terms after they said in several articles that a civic group and its leader were little more than government mouthpieces.

International monitors—including those with the Vienna-based Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe—have frequently criticized the government for its refusal to decriminalize defamation. But while defamation has been a favorite tool in silencing the press, IRFS director Huseynov noted that officials have been inventive in using laws as far-ranging as treason and hooliganism.

Take the case of two video bloggers—30-year-old Emin Milli and 26-year-old Adnan Hajizade—who were arrested in July after posting a series of sketches criticizing government policies. A satirical video the bloggers produced and posted

on YouTube in June may have been a particular trigger for reprisal. The video criticized the country's importation of donkeys, supposedly at high prices. The sketch depicted a fictional press conference at which Hajizade, wearing a donkey suit, talked to a group of Azerbaijani "journalists."

In an Orwellian scenario, Milli and Hajizade were taken into custody after they went to a police station to report an assault. The pair had been debating politics with friends at a Baku restaurant when two unidentified men interrupted the conversation and started a brawl, local press reports said. By the time the bloggers arrived at the police station, the two assailants had supposedly filed a complaint and officers had already decided what to do. Without investigating, police charged Milli and Hajizade with "hooliganism" and "inflicting minor bodily harm," the Azerbaijani press reported. On November 11, a Sabail District Court judge pronounced the bloggers guilty, sentencing Milli to two and a half years in jail and Hajizade to two years.

CPJ decried the case as entrapment and noted that the circumstances were strikingly similar to the 2007 jailing of Genimet Zakhidov, editor of *Azadlyg*. Zakhidov was arrested and sentenced to four years in prison for "hooliganism" and "inflicting minor bodily harm" after a pair of strangers accosted him on a Baku street, then supposedly filed a police complaint claiming they had been the victims. In September, a Baku judge denied an appeal for a lighter sentence because Zakhidov had been reprimanded in prison for not joining a volleyball game, IRFS reported.

In November, CPJ honored one imprisoned journalist whose case was emblematic of the government's efforts to silence its critics. Eynulla Fatullayev, a recipient of CPJ's International Press Freedom Award, was imprisoned in April 2007 on a series of fabricated charges, including terrorism and defamation. Fatullayev, editor of the now-closed independent Russian-language weekly *Realny Azerbaijan* and the Azeri-language daily *Gündalik Azərbaycan*, was jailed in retaliation for his investigation into the 2005 murder of his former boss and mentor, Elmar Huseynov. Fatullayev had alleged an official cover-up in the case.

Reporting from or about the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic—a western exclave that borders Armenia, Iran, and Turkey—remained Azerbaijan's most dangerous assignment. Only a handful of reporters worked in the territory, and they faced intimidation and harassment from local security agents. In February 2009, Idrak Abbasov, a reporter with the Baku-based independent newspaper *Zerkalo* and a researcher with IRFS, traveled to Nakhchivan to study local press freedom conditions. Agents with the Nakhchivan Ministry of National Security (MNB) blindfolded him, took his identity papers, camera, notebook, and cell phone, and interrogated him for hours about his trip. An unidentified agent demanded that Abbasov reveal the names of his colleagues in the region, cursed

at him, and accused him of being a spy for Armenia, the journalist told CPJ after his detention. Before releasing him, officers deleted images from his camera and ordered him to leave Nakhchivan immediately.

Abbasov told CPJ that agents had lured him to an MNB station on the pretext that they would answer questions. He said the mistreatment left him with stress-induced heart problems that required several days of hospitalization.

BELARUS

AUTHORITIES EASED THEIR HEAVY-HANDED TACTICS OF REPRESSION for much of the year even as a restrictive new media law took effect. The change in tone coincided with the European Union's suspension of a three-year-old travel ban against President Aleksandr Lukashenko and 35 top officials that was first imposed in response to the regime's treatment of opposition activists and journalists.

But journalists debunked the notion of any significant, sustained improvement in the press freedom climate. The government continued to bar independent newspapers from using state-controlled distribution companies, police harassed independent and pro-opposition reporters, and regulators denied accreditation to foreign news outlets and their reporters. And by late year, the government began to apply the provisions of its new media law more aggressively. The law, which was passed in 2008 and took effect in February 2009, required all media to obtain new government registration, complicated the accreditation process for reporters, toughened sanctions against news outlets to include closure and suspensions, barred international financing of domestic media, and applied longstanding restrictions on traditional media to online publications. Lukashenko had signed the measure over the objec-

tions of domestic and international media advocates.

Journalists encountered surprisingly few obstacles in the first few months under the new law, CPJ research showed. The Information Ministry created a simple process for media to apply for new registration, Aleksei Korol, editor of the independent weekly *Novy Chas*, told CPJ.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Restrictive law requires media obtain government registration.
- » Administration eases some repressive tactics to gain EU favor.

KEY STATISTIC

13 Independent papers blacklisted by state-controlled distributors.

The Minsk-based Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ) said that by late year about 45 percent of the nation's media outlets, many of them entertainment-based, had successfully obtained registration. The law required all outlets to obtain new registration within a year of its inception on February 8.

Korol told CPJ that authorities had also backed away from explicit repressive tactics—arrests, newsrooms raids, equipment confiscation, and exorbitant fines—that they had heavily relied on in past years. The government did not immediately apply the new media law to online publications, as advocates had feared, and did not block domestic access to pro-opposition Web sites. But the regime did not remove its yoke from the independent media, Korol and others noted.

Andrei Bastunets, a legal analyst for BAJ, told CPJ that the regime's tactics changed in the fall, and the press freedom climate again deteriorated. The Information Ministry unexpectedly amended registration requirements in September by imposing experience and educational requirements for top editorial staff and barring outlets from using an editor's home as an official address, Bastunets said. (Many independent newspapers, small and with few resources, are based in editors' homes.) After these changes, several independent newspapers—*Mahilyouski Chas*, *Soligorsk Plyus*, *Novaya Gazeta Bobruiska*, *Prefekt Plyus*, and *Marinahorskaya Hazeta* among them—saw their applications for registration denied.

Hundreds of other media outlets were waiting in late year for word on their registration applications, and advocates feared the hardening of the government's tone signaled the potential for numerous denials.

The EU imposed travel and financial sanctions against Belarussian officials in 2006 in response to the regime's crackdown on opposition activists and journalists. The travel ban was suspended in October 2008 by the EU, which then extended the suspension throughout 2009. The EU said it was pursuing a policy of engagement; analysts noted that European diplomats were concerned about Russian influence on the former Soviet state. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, EU external relations commissioner, told reporters in Minsk that government progress on democracy and human rights issues—including the release of political prisoners—had prompted the EU to ease the sanctions. Still, Lukashenko's regime had not demonstrated full respect for press freedom or allowed civil society activists to work without fear of reprisal, Ferrero-Waldner told the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

International press freedom advocates—including the International Federation of Journalists, Index on Censorship, and the Open Society Institute—concluded after a September fact-finding mission that authorities continued to rely on “a number of repressive provisions that can be used to silence critical, oppositional, or alternative voices.” In their post-mission report, titled “For Free

and Fair Media in Belarus,” the groups said press freedom was threatened by the state's monopoly on newspaper distribution, the regular denial of accreditation to foreign outlets and their local reporters, and tax and economic policies that favor state media. BAJ noted that tax exemptions for state media gave them a significant competitive advantage over private outlets.

State-controlled distributors Soyuzpechat and Belpochta continued to blacklist 13 independent newspapers, including the prominent publications *Novy Chas*, *Tovarishch*, *Vitebsky Kuryer*, and *Gazeta Slonimskaya*, local and international media experts said. Authorities also harassed private businesses and detained volunteers who sought to circulate the blacklisted publications, CPJ research found. The state-controlled distributors claimed they were acting within the law by refusing to sign service agreements with independent media outlets, Korol said. Their position was backed by Natalya Petkevich, a senior administration official who said the government would not force the distributors to carry independent newspapers in their catalogues and kiosks.

Internet penetration in the country reached 30 percent, the state news agency BelTA reported in March, citing government statistics. This greater access, coupled with the poor climate for the traditional press, led most embattled independent and pro-opposition media to establish themselves on the Web, winning loyal audiences both inside the country and abroad, CPJ research shows. While the government did not exercise any notable online censorship in 2009, its ownership of the country's sole Internet service provider, Beltelekom, gives it the ability to block access to critical publications.

Authorities were sensitive to critical coverage originating from Poland-based broadcasters, leading them to target the outlets for obstruction. Authorities barred Poland-based Radio Racyja and satellite television channel Belsat from opening offices in the country, and denied credentials to their reporters. In November, after a prolonged application process, the Poland-based European Radio for Belarus won permission to open a bureau for one year; the Belarussian government approved the permit just as it was undergoing a periodic EU review. The Foreign Ministry denied an entry visa to Belsat Director Agnieszka Romaszewska, who planned to attend an international conference organized by the German Embassy in Minsk. According to the local press, the Foreign Ministry did not provide Romaszewska with an explanation.

In March, the Information Ministry refused to renew accreditation to Andrzej Poczobut, a local correspondent for Poland's largest daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Authorities told Poczobut his application had been denied because of a series of articles critical of the Lukashenko administration. Poczobut's articles covered a police fingerprinting initiative; the deportation of three Polish Catholic priests; and criminal lawsuits filed against recently released political prisoners.

The Foreign Ministry declared the articles biased and insulting to the president, according to local news reports.

The credentials of journalists Ivan Roman and Viktor Parfenenko of Radio Racyja also were denied, according to local press reports. Throughout the year, prosecutors issued warnings to at least 14 local journalists who contributed to unaccredited foreign broadcasters, Bastunets told CPJ.

In September and October, police harassed journalists covering protest rallies in Minsk that commemorated political prisoners and opposition politicians who disappeared in the late 1990s, local press reports said. Plainclothes agents followed reporters and blocked their cameras when they tried to document arrests of protesters gathered in downtown Minsk, Bastunets told CPJ. Police also detained and beat several journalists at an October 29 opposition rally. The government's long history of arresting and harassing journalists has resulted in widespread self-censorship, especially in the regions, Korol told CPJ.

CROATIA

CROATIA'S EFFORTS TO JOIN THE EUROPEAN UNION BY 2011 DID NOT yield major improvements in press freedom. While the EU said the government had made "substantial progress" on several issues—including the resolution of border disputes, the institution of refugee property rights, and improved cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia—some journalists feared the country was sliding back toward the lawless 1990s, when the ruling nationalist HDZ party suppressed independent news reporting. Police remained inconsistent in investigating attacks against journalists, several of whom faced threats after reporting on government corruption.

A major breakthrough in one case offered some hope. Authorities in Croatia and Serbia brought indictments against eight people in the brutal 2008 assassination of two media executives. Ivo Pukanic, owner and editorial director of the Zagreb-based political weekly *Nacional*, and Niko Franjic, the publication's marketing director, were killed when a bomb exploded under Pukanic's car outside the paper's building. Acting in cooperation with Croatian authorities, police in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, arrested reputed crime boss Sreten Jovic in April on charges of organizing the bombing, according to press reports. In October, prosecutors in Zagreb and Belgrade issued simultaneous indictments of Jovic and seven others, and said the attack had been prompted by *Nacional* investigations into organized crime in the Balkans, news accounts said.

Violence against journalists continued, however, in 2009. In June, reporter Stjepan Mesaric of the weekly *Medjimurske Novine* in the northern city of Ca-

kovec was repeatedly punched in the face, allegedly by the son of a local businessman, according to local press reports. Mesaric had just written an article about corruption in the local construction industry. Police did not charge the man who Mesaric said had punched him, and the journalist told CPJ in a telephone interview that he continued to receive threats from the alleged assailant. Police did not explain the lack of action.

At least two other journalists were under police protection in 2009 after their coverage of government corruption had elicited threats. Hrvoje Appelt of the Zagreb weekly *Globus* began receiving anonymous death threats in late 2008 while examining the personal business activities of then-Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, according to local press reports. Dusan Miljus received a threatening letter in March 2009 after publishing allegations that business leaders and government officials were involved in illegal arms trafficking, according to local press reports. Police reported no progress in solving a June 2008 attack against Miljus that left him with a concussion, a broken arm, and facial bruises.

Croatia has been hit by a wave of violence in recent years, reflecting Sanader's reluctance to crack down on widespread organized crime and government corruption, some of it linked to his allies in the HDZ. The HDZ remained on the defensive for much of the year, struggling with the effects of the global economic crisis and losing political control of several major cities in May municipal elections. Sanader unexpectedly resigned in July and handed the post to his HDZ protégé, Deputy Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor, as the party prepared for presidential elections in early 2010. Kosor, whose attention was focused on the economy and the country's border dispute with Slovenia, took no significant press-related actions.

Journalists complained that media owners, fearing the loss of advertising during a recession, restricted critical coverage of the government and influential companies. In March, Appelt was dismissed by *Globus* after he delved into new government corruption allegations, according to local press reports. In the spring, two prominent journalists—Marinko Culic and Viktor Ivancic—were pushed out of the Rijeka daily *Novi List* after the newspaper's new HDZ-aligned ownership ordered that their articles no longer be published, according to local press reports.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government makes progress on reforms, but press freedom lags.
- » Ruling HDZ gains influence with some media outlets.

8

KEY STATISTIC

People indicted in a car bombing that killed two media executives.

Journalists also cited growing politicization in the influential public broadcaster, Croatian Radio and Television (HRT), which provided generally favorable coverage to the HDZ while sidelining prominent journalists who had criticized the government. HRT executives defended their editorial policies, insisting that they were reporting on political issues of “high public interest,” the state news agency HINA reported. The Croatian Journalists’ Association criticized HRT in July for broadcasting a 50-minute speech by Sanader at an HDZ convention, saying it showed political favoritism and violated the Law on Electronic Media, HINA reported. Srecko Jurdan, a columnist for *Nacional*, termed the process the “HDZ-ization” of the private and public media. In November, HRT executives suspended Ana Jelinic, editor of the news program “Dossier,” claiming that its reporting on alleged government corruption was too speculative, according to local and international news reports.

GEORGIA

WHILE NO JOURNALISTS WERE KILLED OR IMPRISONED IN GEORGIA IN 2009, press freedom in this small South Caucasus nation stagnated due to persistent state manipulation of news media, particularly television broadcasting. In a speech before the U.N. General Assembly in September, President Mikhail Saakashvili boasted of Georgia’s media pluralism, stating that the country has “27 TV stations.” He failed to mention that most stations have little reach and, notably, that his government and its allies have long sought to control television news content, most recently through aggressive efforts to obstruct the cable affiliates of a station aligned with a leading opponent.

Saakashvili had enjoyed strong support from the administration of U.S. President George W. Bush, but his government’s ongoing media manipulation eroded his reputation as a democracy builder. During a visit to Georgia in July,

U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden urged Saakashvili to make his government more transparent and accountable by fostering independent and professional media. In an October interview with the news agency GHN, Lasha Tugushi, editor of the independent Tbilisi-based daily *Rezonansi*, said he believed press freedom

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » TV news politicized due to government manipulation.
- » Opposition-aligned broadcaster obstructed.

7

KEY STATISTIC
Percent of Internet penetration nationwide.

was declining. “There are no more [national] television debates and discussions, the information programs are worse, and property rights are not regulated and defended,” Tugushi said, referring to the government’s continued encroachment on privately owned media corporations.

The broad contours of the government’s years-long efforts to control national television content are well-documented. The television station Rustavi 2—once the flagship of the democratic movement—rested solidly in pro-government hands in 2009. Authorities first gained control of the station in 2004 through the original owner’s coerced sale to a defense official, then in 2006 through a complicated series of buyouts by government loyalists. Critical coverage was eventually scrubbed on Rustavi 2, which ultimately merged with another formerly independent television station, Mze, under the direction of parliamentary member David Bezhuashvili, a Saakashvili ally. The next venture in free media, Imedi TV, weathered an attempted takeover by police in 2007 over its allegations of government complicity in assassinations. But it lost its independence in 2008 after owner Badri Patarkatsishvili was pressured to give up his shares and flee abroad, where he died of a heart attack. His distant cousin, Georgian-American businessman Joseph Kay, gained control of the station after persuading a Tbilisi court to uphold his management rights. The station took a pro-presidential stance.

In 2009, Maestro TV, a two-year-old satellite station featuring news and entertainment, faced government obstruction as it sought to widen its audience. Maestro had obtained government permission in late 2008 to rebroadcast its programming on dozens of local cable affiliates, an important step in broadening its reach since few Georgian viewers have satellite dishes. Although privately owned, Maestro TV was aligned editorially with opposition leader and former Parliament Speaker Nino Burdzhaneladze, and featured programming such as “Cell Number Five,” a talk show in which journalists and politicians vented frustration with Saakashvili.

The Georgian National Communications Commission pushed back in 2009. The agency pressured several local cable affiliates to halt their rebroadcasts of Maestro, going as far as closing some of the stations temporarily for unspecified “technical reasons.” Maestro faced violence as well. In May, unidentified assailants set off a grenade at the station’s offices, blasting out windows and damaging a door but causing no injuries. The station continued operations. Maestro’s founder and general director, Mamuka Glonti, said he believed the blast was intended to prevent the station from airing a program about the 2006 slaying of banker Sandro Girgvliani, the U.S. government-funded Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe reported. The banker was found murdered shortly after an argument in a Tbilisi bar with three senior Interior Ministry officials.

A critical European Union fact-finding report on the August 2008 armed

conflict between Russia and Georgia was a failed litmus test for national television. The networks were either silent about the report's findings or chose to air only conclusions favorable to the Georgian side. The report, written by seasoned diplomat Heidi Tagliavini and issued in October, found that while Russia created various provocations and escalated the war, Georgia bore responsibility for instigating the conflict with its shelling of Tskhinvali. The EU report also called on the media to curb xenophobic sentiments and to provide a balanced view of all sides of the conflict.

In an op-ed piece published in *The Guardian* of London, the opposition leader Burdzhanaidze said administration policies had ensured that coverage of the EU report was one-sided. While opposition voices can get a hearing in newspapers and on cable television, Burdzhanaidze said, their impact is diminished due to presidential control over national broadcasting. For two-thirds of the country, national television channels are the only media available, "and all are directed by the president's inner circle," he wrote.

In a survey of media developments published on the news Web site *Open Democracy*, analyst Robin Llewellyn described the politicization of television in Georgia, with broadcasters providing either intensely pro-government or pro-opposition views. "The problem with Georgian broadcasting," journalist Giorgi Akhvlediani told Llewellyn, "is that we now have a plurality of views, but it is either very pro-government, or very anti-government, with nothing in between."

The Georgian Orthodox Church, long revered in Georgian society, was drawn into a battle with the media in October as one of Saakashvili's closest supporters, Tea Tutberidze of the pro-government Liberty Institute, a Western-supported, university-based nonprofit that played a key role in the Rose Revolution, posted satirical videos of Patriarch Ilia II of Georgia on the social networking site Facebook and on the video-sharing site YouTube, animating his image to make it appear he was mouthing attacks on the president. The Georgian patriarchate had earlier criticized Saakashvili for precipitating the war with Russia. Saakashvili denounced the irreverence and sparked fears of censorship by saying he "won't let anyone misuse the principles of freedom," local press reports said.

After raging the previous year, a cyberspace war in which Russian hackers were attacking Georgian government and civil society Web sites subsided during much of 2009. The battle re-emerged in August as Russian denial-of-service attacks on a Georgian blog caused hours of outages on the popular social networking site Twitter and a slowdown of Facebook that affected millions of users. Internet access in Georgia is limited mainly to those in the capital, with penetration estimated by the International Research and Exchanges Board at only 7 percent throughout the country.

A Russian reporter was harassed as a result of rivalries between the two

countries. On September 18, CPJ urged Georgian authorities to drop trumped-up forgery charges against Besik Pipia, Tbilisi bureau chief for the Russian news agency RIA Novosti. RIA Novosti told CPJ that Pipia's case coincided with Georgia's denial of entry to two Russian journalists invited to attend a public forum on post-conflict relations. After CPJ's advocacy, the case against Pipia was dropped.

KAZAKHSTAN

THE AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT OF THIS CENTRAL ASIAN NATION brazenly defied international standards for freedom of expression even as it prepared to assume chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Vienna-based human rights and security agency. As part of their bid to lead the OSCE in 2010, President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his government pledged to bring the country's repressive media laws into compliance with global standards. Instead, Nazarbayev signed into law a measure that places expansive new restrictions on Internet expression, requires online service providers to collect client information for authorities, and further extends censorship rules for all media. Authorities jailed critics and filed politicized lawsuits that sought to shut down critical news outlets, but reported no progress in investigating assaults on independent reporters.

When the government introduced its purported media reform bill to parliament's lower chamber, the Mazhilis, in January, officials said it would facilitate information-sharing on the Web and establish Internet users' rights and obligations. Kuanyshbek Eskeyev, the head of Kazakhstan's state communications agency, which developed the bill, was quoted in press reports as saying that the new legislation was aimed at protecting Kazakh citizens' constitutional rights.

Local press freedom advocates called the legislation draconian, telling CPJ that it gave authorities even greater ability to silence domestic dissent and block international criticism. Although lawmakers allowed independent media experts to submit suggestions, few such ideas

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Repressive media law takes effect, sets limits online.
- » Politicized lawsuits threaten independent newspapers.

KEY STATISTIC

2010 Year that Kazakhstan assumes chairmanship of OSCE.

were included in the final document. “Media experts and journalists pointed at the problem issues in the bill, but nobody cared about that,” Yevgeny Zhovtis, head of the Almaty-based Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law, told CPJ in June. “The parliament made only a few minor changes and that’s it.”

The legislation effectively equates all Internet information resources—including blogs, forums, chat rooms, personal pages, social networks, and others—with traditional media outlets, thus subjecting them to the country’s longstanding and repressive media regulations. The measure requires Internet service providers to share information about their clients with security services upon request. (Most service providers are domestic, although there are some Russian and European providers.) It also sets broad, new restrictions on election and public protest coverage for all media, allowing authorities to suspend or shut down violators. Under the law, foreign-based Web sites can be blocked domestically without recourse in Kazakh courts. Rozlana Taukina, head of the Almaty-based Journalists in Danger foundation, said the measure was so broadly written that a single comment posted on a Web site could give authorities pretext to close a critical outlet.

Both chambers of parliament, dominated by Nazarbayev allies, passed the legislation after a single hearing. In July, CPJ joined numerous local and international groups, including the OSCE itself, in urging Nazarbayev to veto the bill. Ignoring these calls, he signed the measure on July 11.

Authorities exacted revenge against critics of the Nazarbayev regime. Zhovtis, whose critical analysis of the country’s media climate had drawn international attention and who had testified before the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe about the new media legislation, found himself the target of harsh government retaliation.

In September, Zhovtis was sentenced to four years in a penal colony in connection with a fatal accident in which the car he was driving struck and killed a pedestrian. According to the independent regional news Web site *Ferghana*, Zhovtis was driving to Almaty with friends in July when, blinded by the lights of an approaching car, he struck a young man in the middle of the road. Zhovtis immediately reported the accident to authorities, witnesses testified about extenuating circumstances, and the victim’s family said publicly that the manslaughter charge was not justified. Taukina, who attended the proceedings, said presiding Judge Cholan Tolkunov appeared to have composed the verdict beforehand, leaving the impression that the case was predetermined. The written verdict filed later by the judge was altered to reconcile conflicting details, the defense charged in its appeal. The appeal, nonetheless, was denied.

In August, a court in the southern city of Taraz sentenced Ramazan Yesergepov, editor of the independent weekly *Alma-Ata Info*, to three years in prison on

charges of collecting state secrets, *Ferghana* reported. Agents with the KNB, the Kazakh security service, seized Yesergepov from an Almaty hospital bed (where he was being treated for hypertension) in January, brought him to their regional department in Taraz, and detained him until trial. Yesergepov’s newspaper had published two internal KNB memos marked classified alongside an article about a criminal tax case. The November 2008 article (headlined “Who Rules the Country—the President or the KNB?”) said the head of the agency’s Zhambyl regional office had tried to influence a local prosecutor and judge in a tax case involving a local distillery.

The court granted the KNB’s request to classify Yesergepov’s case as a state secret, which meant the public was barred from the proceedings, and the case file was sealed. Yesergepov was unrepresented when the verdict was handed down. His initial defense attorney abruptly resigned and left the country without explanation in July; a state-appointed lawyer did not attend the final hearing, Taukina told CPJ. In October, the Zhambyl Regional Court rebuffed an appeal.

Authorities continued to seek exorbitant defamation damages from independent and pro-opposition newspapers, forcing one to shut down. In January, a district court in Almaty ordered the independent weekly *Taszhargan*, its editor, and a reporter to pay Member of Parliament Romin Madinov 3 million tenge (US\$20,000) in damages. The lawmaker filed a claim against the weekly after it published an article alleging that Madinov’s business interests benefited from his legislative work. When *Taszhargan* and its staffers appealed in February, a higher court increased damages tenfold. In April, *Taszhargan*’s owners shut down the weekly.

In September, a district court in Almaty ordered the independent business weekly *Respublika – Delovoye Obozreniye*, its editor, and owner to pay the partially state-owned BTA Bank 60 million tenge (about US\$400,000) in damages, *Ferghana* reported. According to press reports, the lawsuit stemmed from a March article that alleged the institution faced bankruptcy because foreign investors were demanding repayment. Filing the lawsuit in August, BTA Bank management said *Respublika*’s article caused the bank to lose billions of tenge in deposit withdrawals, *Ferghana* reported. The paper, which stood by its reporting, pointed out that the bank’s financial woes had been widely covered elsewhere in the press. Taukina said *Respublika* was targeted because it had produced a number of other stories critical of Nazarbayev’s policies. While an appeal was pending, government officials pressured Almaty printing companies to refuse to produce *Respublika*, leaving staffers to use office printers to publish the newspaper, Taukina told CPJ.

In December, Nazarbayev signed into law a measure expected to further restrict reporting on government officials. The broadly worded legislation bans the publication of so-called private information on public figures, while imposing

penalties that include closing of media outlets and imprisonment of up to five years for journalists.

Using extremism legislation, prosecutors persuaded a court to shutter the independent Art-TV in the northern city of Karaganda in connection with a viewer text message. “Kazakhs, unite, let’s beat Russians” was among viewer messages displayed in scrolling text on a March 21 program. Art-TV, which deleted the message after it was shown once, said a technician’s oversight had allowed the words to appear. Ruslan Nikonovich, Art-TV director, said the prosecution was in retaliation for the station’s decision to challenge distribution of government funding to regional broadcasters.

A prominent Kyrgyz journalist, Gennady Pavlyuk, died in late December after plummeting from the upper-story window of an apartment building in Almaty. His hands and legs had been bound with tape, according to news reports. Pavlyuk, 40, had been editor of the Kyrgyz newspaper *Bely Parokhod* and was said to be considering the launch of a pro-opposition, online publication. He had traveled to Kazakhstan on business, according to news reports, but the precise reason was not immediately clear. CPJ was investigating to determine whether the killing was work-related.

KYRGYZSTAN

THE PRESS CLIMATE DETERIORATED IN THIS MOUNTAINOUS CENTRAL ASIAN nation that once offered promise for democracy and free expression. The government’s erratic investigation into the unsolved 2007 murder of editor Alisher Saipov stained the nation’s law enforcement and press freedom record. At least four critical reporters were brutally attacked, and one fled the country in the face of continuing threats. An independent Russian-language newspaper closed after its staffers received anonymous threats.

President Kurmanbek Bakiyev won his second term in a vote that was harshly criticized by domestic and international observers. The July 23 election fell short of democratic standards, according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which cited ballot-stuffing, intimidation of opposition supporters, coercion of government employees, and biased media coverage. OSCE monitors said state-controlled news media produced inequitable coverage, devoting more time and space to Bakiyev than to his challengers. Bakiyev also enjoyed largely positive coverage, the OSCE found, in contrast to the critical reporting devoted to his opponents.

The Elections Commission declared Bakiyev the winner, with 76 percent of the vote, over former Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev and four other

candidates, according to local and international press reports. Atambayev and his backers said the government had rigged the vote, and they refused to recognize the results, according to Radio Azattyk, the Kyrgyz Service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Free Liberty.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Saipov murder case unsolved and beset by questions.
- » Four journalists badly beaten; no arrests made.

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KEY STATISTIC

Percentage of vote won by Kurmanbek Bakiyev in flawed presidential election.

about 400 newspapers are published regularly, most of them in regional centers and the capital. Although the government does not directly control independent newspaper content, self-censorship is pervasive due to the impunity that is common in attacks on the press, CPJ research shows. Most international estimates have put Internet penetration in the single digits, although the Bishkek-based nonprofit, the Civil Initiative on Internet Policy, announced in September that penetration had reached about 14 percent. Parliament has discussed an Internet regulation bill, but no legislation has advanced.

Seen as an ally of press freedom when he took power in 2005 after a popular uprising, Bakiyev continued to offer encouraging statements about the role of news media. He told journalists at a February press conference in Bishkek that they are the country’s “fourth estate” and that his administration took seriously critiques in the press, the independent news agency 24.kg reported. “Nobody is repressing you, and you say what you want,” Bakiyev said.

But his assertions were undercut throughout the year by attacks and intimidation aimed at critical and pro-opposition reporters and carried out with impunity.

On March 3, four unidentified assailants beat and stabbed Syrgak Abdyl-dayev, a political reporter and commentator for the independent newspaper *Reporter-Bishkek*, outside his office in Bishkek. Assailants broke both arms and a leg, and stabbed him more than a dozen times, Abdyl-dayev told CPJ. The reporter had criticized the government’s economic policies and had examined the disappearance of opposition politicians. Although Interior Ministry officials said an

Although media are diverse by regional standards, most residents get news from the state-controlled broadcaster National Television and Radio Corporation (KTR), CPJ research shows. Legislation passed in 2008 gave Bakiyev broad authority over KTR policy-making, allowing him to appoint KTR’s general director and all members of its supervisory board. The OSCE estimated that

investigation into the attack was a high priority, no progress was reported.

Abdyldayev said his attackers intended to send a threatening message to all independent and pro-opposition journalists in the run-up to the July election. “There are not many critical reporters left in the country after the murder of Alisher Saipov, and my attackers wanted to muzzle those few who continue to criticize the authorities,” he told CPJ. Even as he was recovering from the attack and had little mobility, Abdyldayev said he continued to receive threats to his safety and that of his family. In July, after discovering a note at his doorstep that suggested he prepare for his funeral, Abdyldayev and his family fled the country, according to local press reports.

Three other independent journalists were attacked with impunity. In May, three men beat Yrysbek Omurzakov, editor of the independent newspaper *Tribuna*. The editor told CPJ that assailants in two sedans blocked his marked press car when he stopped at a traffic light. The attackers, who identified themselves as police officers, pulled the editor from the vehicle, shouted “beat the journalist,” and pummeled him. Omurzakov told CPJ the attack occurred on a busy downtown street, in front of numerous witnesses, including traffic officers who did not intervene. According to local press reports, authorities tried to persuade Omurzakov not to press charges.

Abduvahab Moniyev, deputy editor of the pro-opposition Kyrgyz-language biweekly *Achyk Sayasat*, was attacked in June, the Bishkek-based news agency Aki-Press reported. The Moscow-based regional news Web site *Ferghana* said an unidentified caller lured Moniyev to a meeting under the pretext of having sensitive information. According to *Ferghana*, four assailants beat Moniyev at the meeting place but did not take any of his belongings. Moniyev had just begun writing a column in *Achyk Sayasat* in which he profiled and criticized local politicians.

Kubanychbek Zholdoshev, a reporter with the government weekly *Osh Shamy*, suffered a concussion and broken ribs in November when three assailants beat him as he was walking along a street in Osh. Zholdoshev had been left stranded moments earlier when traffic police stopped the taxi in which he was riding and began questioning the driver. Osh police dismissed the beating as a random act of street thugs, but CPJ sources disputed the account. Almaz Ismanov, a local analyst for the Moscow-based Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, told CPJ that Zholdoshev had just been threatened in connection with an article detailing student protests over poor education and corruption at Osh State University.

One independent newspaper shut down in the face of threats. Bermet Bukasheva, chief editor of the Bishkek-based weekly *Litsa* (Faces), told *Ferghana* in March that she closed the newspaper after receiving intimidating messages from

anonymous callers—and seeing that the attack on Abdyldayev had been carried out with impunity.

The greatest blot on the government’s record was its continued failure to solve the 2007 murder of Alisher Saipov, the 26-year-old editor of the Uzbek-language newspaper *Siyosat* (Politics). Saipov was shot at close range outside his downtown office in Osh in October 2007. Colleagues told CPJ that Uzbek security agents might have been involved in the murder. Saipov, a Kyrgyz citizen of Uzbek ethnicity, had aggressively covered Uzbekistan’s political scene. A month before his slaying, state-controlled Uzbek media had smeared Saipov in publications and broadcasts, and the journalist reported being followed by Uzbek security agents.

The integrity of the government’s investigation has been undermined by recurring problems: Saipov’s family told CPJ they have been consistently kept in the dark; investigators have been shuffled on and off the case; prosecutors twice tried to close the investigation in 2008.

The case took another strange twist in April 2009, when authorities said they had found the murder weapon and identified it as belonging to a drug dealer whom they had detained in southern Kyrgyzstan, *Ferghana* reported. Interior Minister Moldomusa Kongantiyev announced the development at a Bishkek press conference but did not name the suspect, disclose any charges against him, or say what role he might have played in the murder. Avaz Saipov, the journalist’s father, told CPJ he had learned of the detention from news reports.

The purported break in the case immediately came under fire from skeptics who noted a striking absence of details or supporting evidence. The announcement was also directly at odds with earlier developments in the case: In 2007 and 2008, investigators said they were probing an Uzbek connection, provided news outlets with a photo of two alleged assailants, and said they had already found the murder weapon.

Court proceedings were murky at best. Avaz Saipov told CPJ that prosecutors had failed to attend three scheduled hearings. In late July, he said, a hearing was finally held, but an Osh City Court judge found insufficient evidence to proceed and ordered the case returned to investigators for additional work. Prosecutors instead filed an appeal, winning the removal of the judge and permission to proceed with the case.

Facing international skepticism, including statements from CPJ, authorities publicly identified the suspect in October as Abdufarit Rasulov. Without providing details, Olzhobai Kazabayev, a spokesman for the Kyrgyz Interior Ministry, told Radio Azattyk that investigators had made “enormous efforts” to solve the murder and had determined that Uzbek agents were not involved. The suspect denied involvement in the murder and said police had beaten him, the independent news Web site *Uznews* reported.

RUSSIA

AFTER A DEADLY DECADE FOR THE PRESS, THE TONE SET BY THE KREMLIN appeared to have changed. President Dmitry Medvedev said in July that justice in journalist murders is important “to honor the people who died while defending our legal system, defending regular people, and to educate an entire new generation of citizens.” International attention intensified, too, as the European Parliament, top U.S. officials, and the U.N. Human Rights Committee condemned ongoing and unpunished attacks on journalists.

But from the streets of Moscow to the restive regions of Chechnya and Dagestan, the brutal reality did not change. At least three journalists were killed for their work in 2009, bringing to 19 the number of work-related slayings in Russia this decade. There were a few tentative advances toward justice in 2009—arrests in one murder, pledges to re-examine other unsolved slayings—but those steps did little to alter the dangerous conditions confronting the nation’s critical press.

A few snapshots to illustrate: Two of the 2009 murder victims worked for a single paper, the independent *Novaya Gazeta*; five of its reporters and editors were slain this decade. Five journalists in towns across Russia were badly beaten in 2009 after covering sensitive subjects, including government corruption and official misconduct. In 11 cases during the year, journalists, their media outlets, or their families were threatened, harassed, forced to leave their assignments, or prosecuted on politicized charges. Russia is the fourth-deadliest country in the world for journalists, and the ninth worst in solving those crimes, according to CPJ research.

CPJ advocacy continued to focus on impunity. In September, a CPJ delegation traveled to Moscow to issue an investigative report, *Anatomy of Injustice*, which examined Russia’s failure to solve journalist murders. CPJ’s Kati Marton, Nina Ognianova, and Jean-Paul Marthoz met with officials from the presidential human rights council, the Foreign Ministry, and the Investigative Committee of the Prosecutor General’s Office—the lead agency in charge of solving the killings. Investigators agreed to meet with CPJ again in 2010 to discuss progress in the

cases. CPJ traveled to Brussels as well, where it urged European Union officials to actively engage with Russia on impunity in crimes against the press.

The year got off to a devastating start when Anastasiya Baburova, a 25-year-old freelancer who reported on neo-fascist groups for *Novaya Gazeta*, and Stanislav Markelov, a prominent human rights lawyer, were shot and killed on a busy street just a mile from the Kremlin. Early on the afternoon of January 19, the two were walking together toward a metro stop after leaving a press conference at which Markelov had criticized the early release of a Russian army colonel convicted of murdering a Chechen girl. An assassin wearing a ski mask approached from behind, shooting Markelov and then Baburova with a pistol fitted with a silencer.

In the aftermath, *Novaya Gazeta* requested permission from the Interior Ministry for its staffers to carry guns for self-protection. “The state cannot defend us,” Editor-in-Chief Dmitry Muratov told the independent radio station Ekho Moskv. The Interior Ministry declined the request, but police did make two arrests in the case in November. The suspects were identified in the press as members of a neo-fascist group. Nikita Tikhonov, 29, was accused of being the gunman, while Yevgeniya Khasis, 24, was said to be the lookout. The Investigative Committee and the Federal Security Service (FSB), which conducted a joint investigation, did not say whether the suspects had acted on their own or at the bidding of others. The case was pending in late year.

On July 15, another assassination shook the independent Russian press. Grozny-based Natalya Estemirova, who contributed articles on human rights abuses in Chechnya to *Novaya Gazeta* and the independent Caucasus news Web site *Kavkazsky Uzel*, and who worked as a researcher for Human Rights Watch and the domestic rights group Memorial, was abducted by four men who forced her into a sedan and sped off. Her body, with multiple gunshot wounds, was found hours later near the village of Gazi-Yurt in neighboring Ingushetia. Witnesses saw the kidnappers but were too afraid to speak, press reports said.

Through her reporting and research, Estemirova had accumulated evidence linking human rights crimes to Chechen authorities, and particularly to armed units loyal to Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov. She was among the few remaining journalists based in Chechnya to regularly report on human rights issues. The chilling impact of Estemirova’s murder was immediate. *Novaya Gazeta* announced it would suspend reporting trips to Chechnya because it could not guarantee the safety of its journalists. The Grozny branch of Memorial, which Estemirova headed, suspended activities for nearly six months before resuming work in late December. No arrests were made or progress reported in the investigation.

On August 11, a Dagestani journalist known for his critical commentary was found shot in his car on a street in the capital, Makhachkala. The victim, Abdulmalik Akhmedilov, was deputy editor of the Makhachkala-based daily

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » International community intensifies pressure to halt impunity.
- » Authorities restart investigations into Klebnikov, Politkovskaya murders.

KEY STATISTIC

19 Journalists murdered in retaliation for their work since 2000. Murder convictions have been won in one case.

Hakikat and a chief editor of the political monthly *Sogratl*, both of which served Dagestan's Avar ethnic group. In his *Hakikat* columns, Akhmedilov had sharply criticized federal and local officials for suppressing religious and political dissent under the guise of an "anti-extremism" campaign, a colleague told CPJ. Neighbors had seen a Lada sedan with tinted windows and no license plates parked in Akhmedilov's neighborhood at least two days before the killing, the colleague said. No arrests or progress had been reported by late year.

CPJ was investigating two other deaths to determine whether they were work-related. Shafiq Amrakhov, editor of the regional news agency RIA 51, died in a Murmansk hospital on January 5, six days after suffering head wounds from a gun firing rubber bullets. Amrakhov, who was conscious immediately after the attack, told relatives that an unknown man was waiting for him by the elevator of his Murmansk apartment, fired several times, and ran out. The case was unsolved in late year. Vyacheslav Yaroshenko, editor-in-chief of the Rostov-on-Don newspaper *Korruptsiya i Prestupnost*, died June 29 from injuries sustained in an attack two months earlier, according to press reports. The editor was found unconscious in the entrance of his apartment building on the morning of April 30. *Korruptsiya i Prestupnost* regularly published articles on alleged Rostov government corruption. That case was also unsolved in late year.

In December, a court in the southern republic of Ingushetia convicted a police officer of negligent homicide in the 2008 killing of online publisher Mago-med Yevloyev. The victim's family called the verdict a miscarriage of justice and asserted that the officer, who was sentenced to two years in a low-security prison, had purposely shot Yevloyev while the journalist was in custody.

Among the regional journalists beaten during the year, one case stood out for police indifference and another for its pure brutality. Yuri Grachev, editor-in-chief of the pro-opposition weekly *Solnechnogorsky Forum*, was attacked and left unconscious and bleeding in the entrance of his apartment building in the town of Solnechnogorsk on February 3. Moscow Region police spokesman Yevgeny Gildeyev told the business daily *Kommersant* that the 72-year-old journalist "might have slipped and fallen." The paper had been covering a sensitive municipal election campaign at the time of the attack.

In the southern city of Saratov, two assailants attacked Vadim Rogozhin, then managing director of the independent media holding company *Vzglyad*, as he emerged from an elevator in his apartment building on March 5. The attackers struck him repeatedly on the head with heavy objects, leaving him with a fractured skull and multiple lacerations that required three months of hospitalization. Rogozhin had at one time covered regional government corruption for the newspaper *Saratovskiy Vzglyad*. In August, police identified a local businessman as a suspect in the Rogozhin attack and several others. In September, Rogozhin

resigned from the managing director's position to start an online newspaper.

CPJ documented 11 cases of harassment, intimidation, and politicized prosecution during the year. The episodes included threats—as in the case of Aleksei Venediktov, prominent editor-in-chief of the independent radio station Ekho Moskvyy, who found an ax stuck in a log by his door on February 5. Some involved legal harassment—as in the case of the Makhachkala-based independent weekly *Chernovik*, sued in June by Russia's state media regulator on "extremism" charges after the paper quoted a Dagestani rebel leader. And some involved obstruction—as in the case of the independent broadcaster REN-TV, whose three-member crew was threatened and forced to abandon an assignment on corruption in the southern republic of Ingushetia in October.

In September, after CPJ's advocacy, authorities in Abakan, capital of Khakassia in southern Siberia, dropped defamation charges against online editor Mikhail Afanasyev. The editor had questioned the state's response to an explosion in August at Russia's biggest power plant. Afanasyev had faced up to three years in prison.

Advocacy by CPJ also led to some notable changes in the political and law enforcement climate. During a visit to Moscow in July, U.S. President Barack Obama addressed the issue of impunity in an interview with *Novaya Gazeta*. "Americans and Russians," he said, "have a common interest in the development of the rule of law, the strengthening of democracy, and the protection of human rights." Shortly after Obama's summit with Medvedev, Russian authorities agreed to reopen the dormant probe into the 2004 murder of *Forbes Russia* Editor Paul Klebnikov, an American, and work in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice.

In one of the most disappointing investigations, the unsolved 2006 murder of *Novaya Gazeta* correspondent Anna Politkovskaya, the Supreme Court issued two rulings that offered some new hope. The court overturned the February acquittals of three defendants and ordered prosecutors to reinvestigate the murder case. The defendants—Sergei Khadzhikurbanov, a former police officer, and brothers Ibragim and Dzhabrail Makhmudov—had been acquitted of secondary roles in the killing. They could be prosecuted again as part of the new probe. Investigative Committee officials told CPJ that they were also seeking the suspected gunman, Rustam Makhmudov, a third brother, as part of the new investigation. Rustam Makhmudov was believed to have fled abroad.

On September 17, two days after the release of *Anatomy of Injustice*, the European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the murders of journalists and human rights advocates in Russia, and called on Moscow to "swiftly, thoroughly, effectively, and promptly investigate those murders and bring those responsible for and also those involved in these brutal acts to justice." Parliament

also convened a hearing on the issue and awarded its 2009 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Estemirova's organization, Memorial.

Speaking at a reception for journalists and civil society activists in Moscow in October, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton highlighted impunity in journalist murders, quoted CPJ's research, and emphasized the importance of transparency in government, the rule of law, and public trust in state institutions. "When violence like this goes unpunished in any society," Clinton said, "it's undermining the rule of law, chills public discourse, which is, after all, the lifeblood of an open society, and diminishes the public's confidence and trust in their own government."

The same month, the U.N. Human Rights Committee condemned Russia's failure to protect journalists and human rights defenders from violent retaliation for their work. The committee evaluates compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and issues non-binding prescriptions. In a set of recommendations to the Russian government, published on October 30, the committee said it was "concerned at the alarming incidence of threats, violent assaults, and murders of journalists and human rights defenders in the Russian Federation, which had created a climate of fear and a chilling effect on the media, and regretted the lack of effective measures taken to protect the right to life and security of those persons." The committee gave Moscow one year to update it on what it was doing to remedy the record.

UKRAINE

A DEEP RECESSION, TENSIONS WITH NEIGHBORING RUSSIA, AND A COMING presidential election placed greater stress on the country's already weak and fractured political leadership. While the media remained freer and more pluralistic than in most post-Soviet countries, journalists struggled to report on widespread government corruption and other abuses. A chaotic and sometimes dangerous environment for journalists increased the prevalence of self-censorship.

Long evaporated—and almost forgotten—was the elation that had swept through the capital, Kyiv, and much of the country after the Orange Revolution led to the election of reformist President Viktor Yushchenko. While Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko halted censorship of the national media and tolerated pluralism in news reporting after being propelled to office, internal rivalries created political deadlock and doomed their broader plans for reform. A field of 18 candidates was expected to be on the ballot for the first round of presidential voting in January, with Tymoshenko and opposition leader Viktor Yanukovich among the contenders.

Despite relatively strong laws to guarantee press freedom, the bitter political squabbling in Kyiv left the country's justice system dysfunctional and politicized.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Broadcast media face strong political pressure.
- » Ex-Interior Ministry official arrested in Gongadze murder.

KEY STATISTIC

5 Years since the Orange Revolution. Optimism has since dimmed.

Police failed to act in several cases of attacks on journalists. Officers in Kyiv ignored the pleas of photojournalist Kirill Stremousov in June when three security guards attacked him, breaking his hand and destroying his camera, according to local press reports. Stremousov had apparently angered the guards by taking photos of a car accident. In September, officers failed to intervene when several assailants attacked a television crew from ATV in front of a courthouse in Odessa, smashing their camera, slashing the hand of cameraman Dmitry Dokunov, and striking reporter Olesya Klintsova on the head with a heavy object, according to local press reports.

Authorities made progress in their investigation into the 2000 murder of Georgy Gongadze, editor of the muckraking news Web site *Ukrainska Pravda*. Aleksei Pukach, a former Interior Ministry general who was named a suspect in 2003, was finally arrested in the northeastern region of Zhytomyr on July 21, according to press reports. Pukach, head of the Interior Ministry's surveillance department at the time of Gongadze's murder, was charged with murder and was jailed pending trial.

Authorities allege that Pukach strangled the journalist, and Interior Ministry subordinates then decapitated the body. The other officers were convicted in 2008 of participating in Gongadze's abduction and murder; they were sentenced to 12 to 13 years to prison. The head was not found, although news reports said Pukach had provided new information about its location. Authorities were testing fragments found outside Kyiv in late year to determine whether they could be matched to Gongadze.

The arrest of the former high-ranking official, made while U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden was visiting Ukraine, came as the government aggressively courted U.S. and European support as a counterweight against Russia. The Kremlin has sought to reassert influence in the former Soviet state, in part by leveraging oil and gas supplies.

While Gongadze's family and press freedom advocates praised authorities for arresting Pukach, they criticized prosecutors for not investigating credible allegations that former President Leonid Kuchma had ordered the killing.

“Hasty justice will only harm the investigation,” said Myroslava Gongadze, the journalist’s widow, according to Ukraine General Newswire. She urged investigators to continue questioning Pukach and others about the plot.

With much of the country’s influential broadcast media owned by politicians and business people aligned with one of the country’s feuding political clans, journalists faced growing pressure from managers to censor themselves ahead of the presidential election, according to news accounts. In June, the Kyiv-based Novy Kanal television station dismissed Volodymyr Pavlyuk, editor of the news program “Reporter,” after he aired a clip that was politically embarrassing to Tymoshenko, according to local press reports. In the clip, Tymoshenko cried out “All is lost!” when the text of her speech disappeared from a teleprompter. The clip became an online sensation because it was seen as a metaphor for the country’s political crisis. Novy Kanal executives said the editor was dismissed not in response to political pressure, but because the use of Internet video clips violated policy, *Ukrainska Pravda* reported.

Ownership of the country’s six private, national television channels was often effectively hidden by principals who registered the outlets under companies based abroad, according to research by the International Research and Exchanges Board. Given the bitter arguments between the country’s political factions, such tightly held ownership prevented the public from understanding the motivations behind much of the televised political coverage.

Journalists faced problems covering government agencies, a number of which denied access to public information and official meetings. In many instances, the low level of transparency reflected an effort by politicians to hide conflicts of interest. On February 17, reporters from the local newspaper *Rovenkovskiy Vesti* and the television station RTV in the northwestern city of Rivne were barred from a city council meeting about the appropriation of local land, even though the council was required to hold meetings that were open to the public, according to local press reports.

The political squabbling in Kyiv and jockeying ahead of the 2010 presidential election left media regulatory agencies unreformed. Media analysts and lawyers reported that the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council’s process for issuing broadcast licenses and inspecting broadcast facilities was politicized and secretive.

Politicians around the country demanded loyalty from the local affiliates of the state-run National Television and Radio Company of Ukraine (NTU), retaliating against them if they tried to report the news in an independent manner. In September, local authorities cut off funding for the Dnepropetrovsk branch of NTU in southeastern Ukraine in retaliation for a perceived failure to sufficiently praise the work of Gov. Viktor Bondar, according to local press reports.

The years of political gridlock in Kyiv exacerbated the cultural divisions between the pro-European, Ukrainian-speaking population in the northern and western regions, and the pro-Moscow sympathies of the Russian-speaking population in the southern and eastern regions. Political leaders in Moscow exploited the tension by using Russia’s powerful state media to flood eastern Ukraine with propaganda vilifying pro-Western politicians in Kyiv. Ukrainian authorities responded by making stricter checks of Russian journalists entering the country and conducting closer monitoring of Russian-language television rebroadcasting within the country.

Ukraine’s economy, which had been growing rapidly, was hit hard by the global recession. The economic free fall led to a drop in the value of the national currency and layoffs in the country’s steel and chemical industries. A significant drop in advertising raised fears that media pluralism would decline because financial pressures and greater competition would force more of the country’s private media outlets to seek government subsidies or come under the ownership of the country’s dominant political and business clans.

UZBEKISTAN

PRESIDENT ISLAM KARIMOV’S AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT HELD at least seven journalists in prison, retaining its notorious distinction as the region’s leading jailer of journalists. Authorities harassed independent journalists, blocked critical news Web sites, and retained their tight grip on traditional media. Lawyers who defended journalists found themselves the targets of state retaliation as the country’s judicial system grew more punitive. While authorities kept a stranglehold on free expression at home, Uzbek diplomats insisted that their country’s actions were consistent with democratic principles.

Karimov, who rose to leadership in Uzbekistan under Soviet rule, marked two decades in power in June. While proclaiming himself a democrat after the demise of the Soviet Union, his policies have consistently reflected authoritarian traditions. His regime has imprisoned its critics and forced them into exile, violated human rights, and brought the country’s once-vibrant independent press to near extinction.

Government figures show more than 1,100 domestic media outlets. Although most are technically independent from the state, agents with the Uzbek security service, known as the SNB, censor print and broadcast reports before they reach the public, CPJ research shows. In March, SNB representatives held a series of meetings with Uzbek editors in the capital, Tashkent, to direct them to endorse government polices and to avoid critical reporting, the independent regional news Web site *Voice of Freedom* reported.

Topics such as corruption, terrorism, religious extremism, the environment, health care, and women's rights are discussed on talk shows and news programs, but only at the initiative and with the permission of the SNB, according to CPJ sources, all of whom requested anonymity for fear of reprisal. Sources said news and talk shows address topical issues in general terms only, and do not critically scrutinize named officials. Critical coverage of Karimov and his family is forbidden. Fear of losing a job, being exposed to harassment by SNB agents, or going to jail on fabricated charges contribute to widespread self-censorship among local journalists, sources told CPJ.

CPJ sources said authorities continued to block critical and independent news Web sites inside the country. A number of regional news Web sites—including *Ferghana*, *Uznews*, *Centrasia*, *EurasiaNet*, *Voice of Freedom*, *Lenta*, *News-ru*, and those associated with the BBC Uzbek Service, the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle—were inaccessible in Uzbekistan throughout the year. Authorities also blocked online access to WordPress, the blog publishing platform, those sources said.

In February, Samarkand regional prosecutors arrested Dilmurod Saiid, a journalist and human rights activist, on trumped-up charges of extortion and forgery, *Ferghana* reported. The journalist had written about corruption in government agricultural programs and had helped the Tashkent-based rights group Ezgulik defend farmers' rights. Several witnesses recanted their statements against Saiid, defense lawyer Ruhiddin Komilov said. But in a closed proceeding in July—without a defense lawyer in attendance—Saiid was sentenced to 12 and a half years in prison. During the proceedings, Komilov was stripped of his license to practice law under a new and politicized regulatory process.

Based on a 2008 law governing the practice of law, the government decreed in March that all lawyers must pass a state exam and obtain membership in the newly formed, state-controlled Chamber of Lawyers, *Ferghana* reported. The chamber effectively replaced the Lawyers Association of Uzbekistan, an independent professional organization. CPJ sources and press reports said that Komilov and Rustam Tulyaganov, both of whom had defended independent journalists, lost their licenses after supposedly failing the state-administered exam.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Nation is a persistent jailer of journalists.
- » Security agents enforce rigid censorship.

KEY STATISTIC

4 Years EU human rights sanctions were in place before being lifted in 2009.

Uzbek authorities briefly imprisoned two other journalists in 2009. In February, a court in eastern Uzbekistan sentenced independent journalist Kushodbek Usmon to six months in jail on criminal charges of defamation and insult after he published an article critical of local police, *Voice of Freedom* said. After his release in July, Usmon told RFE/RL that he had been tortured in prison. In August, Uzbek border guards detained Shukhrat Shodiyev, a Tajik reporter who had contributed to the Dushanbe-based news agency Asia Plus and to *Ferghana*. Authorities took Shodiyev from a train after they found his press card, Tajik-language newspapers, a copy of the Quran, and compact discs with Chechen music, he later told *Ferghana*. He told *Ferghana* he was questioned at length about his work as a journalist and the reasons for a trip he had just taken to Chechnya. Shodiyev was freed in September as part of a presidential amnesty.

Less fortunate were the seven writers and editors still held when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census of imprisoned journalists on December 1. CPJ research shows that the Karimov regime has been a persistent jailer of journalists throughout the decade. In one case, authorities forced a freelance reporter—Dzhamshid Karimov, the president's nephew—into a psychiatric hospital without a court order or medical diagnosis. Regional authorities snatched Karimov from the street in his hometown of Jizzakh in September 2006, and continued to hold him in a ward in Samarkand, sources told CPJ.

Despite this ongoing repression, the European Union lifted an arms embargo imposed in 2005 after Uzbek government troops killed hundreds of protesters in the eastern city of Andijan. The EU said authorities had made some progress on human rights—releasing some jailed political prisoners and introducing habeas corpus rights—but its October decision appeared to be based largely on geopolitical realities. EU officials apparently saw diminishing value in isolating the Karimov regime. Uzbekistan has vast oil and gas reserves—and markets in Russia and China, where leaders valued the natural resources more than Uzbekistan's human rights record.

In talks with the EU, Uzbek diplomats had aggressively defended their country's policies, suggesting that the constitution ensures human rights, RFE/RL reported. International rights activists criticized the EU's decision. "The EU has effectively abandoned the cause of human rights in Uzbekistan," Human Rights Watch said in a statement.

No journalists were killed in Uzbekistan, although a number of regional reporters and rights defenders suspected that Uzbek state agents were behind the 2007 slaying of editor Alisher Saipov in the Kyrgyzstan border town of Osh. Saipov, an ethnic Uzbek, had fiercely criticized human rights violations in Uzbekistan. The case remained unsolved, although officials in Kyrgyzstan said in 2009 that Uzbek security agents had nothing to do with the murder.

SNAPSHOTS

ATTACKS & DEVELOPMENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

ALBANIA

- » The independent daily *Tema* was abruptly evicted from its offices in a state-owned building in Tirana. Police barred staffers from entering the offices on January 8 on the orders of the Ministry of Interior, said Publisher Mero Baze, who noted that the newspaper had signed a 20-year lease in 2007. He said he believed the government had acted in retaliation for a series of articles published in fall 2008 that alleged high-level government corruption. (In December 2008, after the stories were published, Baze's car caught fire and exploded, the Tirana-based Albanian Media Institute reported.) After the eviction, Baze continued to publish *Tema* in relocated offices, but he estimated the paper had lost about 500,000 euros (US\$750,000) in improvements it had made to the old headquarters.
- » Several men viciously attacked Baze at a bar in downtown Tirana on November 2, after he published a series of critical reports in *Tema* and discussed them on his local television show, "Faktor Plus." Baze told CPJ that he had accused Rezart Taci, a principal in local oil businesses, of tax evasion and had criticized authorities for inaction. Baze told CPJ that the businessman and his bodyguards had struck him repeatedly, causing him to lose consciousness. The assault was witnessed by two of Baze's colleagues. In a statement to CPJ, Taci denied involvement into the attack and said Baze's tax allegations were unfounded. Police arrested Taci on November 5 in connection with the assault, Reuters reported.

GREECE

- » Four assailants on two motorcycles fired guns and threw an improvised explosive device at a parking lot of the Athens-based Alter TV station on February 17, the Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) reported. The attack took place shortly before the station aired its prime-time newscast, but no injuries were reported, according to SEEMO and international press reports. Some vehicles were damaged. George Stergiopoulos, an Alter TV reporter, told CNN the attackers fired at least 13 shots before fleeing. *The New York Times* reported that a local radical group, Sect of Rebels, claimed responsibility and said it was targeting journalists for "colluding with the corrupt

establishment." The Associated Press said the group had also attacked a police precinct in Athens.

KOSOVO

- » Anonymous death threats were made in mid-year against Jeta Xharra, head of the Kosovo office of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), and her colleagues. The threats followed the May 28 edition of BIRN-Kosovo's weekly television program, "Life in Kosovo," hosted by Xharra on public broadcaster Radio Television Kosovo (RTK). The program noted that authorities had harassed BIRN-Kosovo reporters who sought to interview residents of Skenderaj about campaign promises. A few days after the program aired, the local newspaper *Infopress*, which carries considerable government advertising, published at least three commentaries openly hostile to Xharra and her colleagues. A front page article accused the BIRN-Kosovo journalists of being Serbian spies, and a separate commentary likened "Life in Kosovo" to a "fascist campaign," BIRN-Kosovo reported. A subsequent *Infopress* commentary said the author "would be honored to shake the hand" of anyone who would "punish" the reporting team. After the *Infopress* publication, anonymous, violent messages flooded the station's e-mail inbox. CPJ wrote a protest letter to Prime Minister Hashim Thaci and urged his government to investigate the threats and protect the BIRN-Kosovo journalists.

MOLDOVA

- » In April, authorities barred at least 19 journalists for Romanian newspapers, broadcasters, and news agencies from entering Moldova to cover anti-Communist rallies in the capital, Chisinau. Stefan Candea, vice president of the Bucharest-based Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism, told CPJ that border guards had given conflicting reasons for refusing the journalists entry. The government offered no official explanation. Approximately 10,000 protesters took to the streets to protest the April 5 parliamentary election, won by President Vladimir Voronin's Communist Party. The protesters said the elections had been rigged and called for a new vote; on the second day of protests, some protesters stormed and looted the Moldovan parliament and president's office, the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reported. Voronin, whose government is allied with Moscow, accused Romania of encouraging pro-Western protests, according to The Associated Press. Dozens of people were injured and 200 arrested.

SLOVENIA

- » Slovenian authorities filed criminal defamation charges in July against Magnus Berglund, a producer for the Helsinki-based public broadcaster YLE, after his documentary alleged corruption in the Slovenian government, the broadcaster said. According to YLE, Berglund's report accused Prime Minister Janez Jansa and others of accepting bribes in connection with a defense contract. Jansa denied the accusation and asked prosecutors to open a criminal probe against the journalist, international press reports said. YLE said it stood behind its story. According to the Vienna-based International Press Institute (IPI), Jansa's government also asked Finnish authorities to pressure YLE, claiming the broadcaster's conduct "could shake mutual confidence between the two states." The Finnish government refused the request, IPI said. Berglund said he would no longer travel to Slovenia for fear of being arrested, according to the news Web site *EU Observer*. The charges could bring up to six months in prison.

UNITED KINGDOM

- » The High Court in Belfast, Northern Ireland, ruled in June that Suzanne Breen, an editor for the Dublin-based *Sunday Tribune*, had a right to protect her sources. The Police Services of Northern Ireland had sought a court order to force Breen to reveal her sources in the Real IRA, a splinter group of the Irish Republican Army, whom she had interviewed for an April article, according to the London-based *Guardian*. The story quoted Real IRA members as claiming responsibility for the March killing of two British soldiers in the town of Antrim. The story also contradicted details included in the official account of the murder. According to the *Guardian*, Belfast police also demanded that Breen hand over her mobile phone, computer records, and interview notes. Breen refused to comply and argued that turning over her sources and notes could put her own life in danger, the *Guardian* reported.
- » Four assailants knocked down and kicked Jim McDowell, editor of the Belfast edition of the Dublin-based tabloid *Sunday World*, in Belfast, Northern Ireland, press reports said. McDowell told the BBC that one assailant said: "Your paper is trying to get my brother killed." Two weeks earlier, supporters of four suspects in the 2001 murder of *Sunday World* reporter Martin O'Hagan had damaged McDowell's car outside a Belfast courthouse, *The Guardian* reported. McDowell had reported on his colleague's murder. Belfast police opened investigations into both attacks.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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Fueled by the Internet, human rights coverage has grown throughout the region. Governments, initially caught unaware, are pushing back aggressively. Who will win the struggle?

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PHOTOS

Section break: Reuters/Morteza Nikoubazl—A spokesman for Iran's Guardian Council speaks to reporters during the government's massive crackdown on dissent. Analysis: Reuters/Mona Sharaf—Reports of Egyptian police torture spark protests in Cairo.

HUMAN RIGHTS COVERAGE SPREADS, DESPITE GOVERNMENT PUSHBACK

BY MOHAMED ABDEL DAYEM AND ROBERT MAHONEY

THE MEDIA IN THE MIDDLE EAST LOVED THE INTIFADA. EVERY detail of Israel's violations of human rights in the late 1980s in the West Bank and Gaza appeared in the Arabic and Farsi press. The governments that owned or controlled these media outlets loved it, too. When pan-Arab satellite television stations emerged in the 1990s, they looped hours of footage of Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers repressing Palestinians.

But it did not take long for Arab journalists to use their newly honed reporting skills on their own political leaders. "Prior to the creation of the Palestinian Authority in 1993, Palestinian journalists reported on violations by the Israelis, but after 1993 they also started reporting on violations perpetrated by the PA," said Musa Rimawi, director of the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms. "In the larger Arab world we observed the same trend of more introspective reporting on these issues, especially with the rising prominence of human rights organizations as well as transnational media."

News-starved audiences across the region flocked to the new channels, foremost among them Al-Jazeera, owned by the tiny emirate of Qatar. It built a viewership in part by covering social and political issues that national television outlets in larger states like Egypt, Morocco, or Algeria would never touch.



"In Tunisia, people learned about human rights violations mainly from satellite TV stations and particularly Al-Jazeera, which was seen by many Tunisians as a breath of oxygen," said local journalist Naziha R jiba, a recipient of CPJ's 2009 International Press Freedom Award.

Outside of the Palestinian issue, however, human rights reporting remained a tiny component of broadcast and print output. Then came the Internet. The digital revolution that started in the late 1990s is still transforming the gathering and dissemination of news in the Arab world, where dictatorships far outnumber democracies. Online journalism and blogging are flourishing. Once-taboo subjects such as human rights abuses are now covered in unprecedented detail by an army of professional and "citizen" journalists in a region with the fastest growth of Internet penetration in the world.

The speed of the transformation caught many governments unaware. But leaders who depend on controlling information for their political survival have awakened, and they are turning to technology to censor and filter the Internet. If that fails, they resort to harassment, attacks, or imprisonments. In the past year or so governments have pushed back against independent reporters and bloggers, but journalists believe that in the long run technology will make it impossible for all but the most authoritarian regimes to stem the tide of information.

For decades, the mainstream media in Egypt ignored human rights reporting. But in 2006, bloggers Mohamed Khaled and Wael Abbas began posting video clips of police brutality. "Once people saw the footage, they had to know more. It was compelling, and left no room for doubt that torture was taking place in our police stations," Khaled told CPJ. The story became so big that much of the broadcast and print media eventually covered it.

**EGYPTIAN MEDIA IGNORED
HUMAN RIGHTS UNTIL
BLOGGERS BEGAN POSTING
CLIPS OF POLICE BRUTALITY.**

Journalist Noha Atef, who runs *TortureInEgypt*, a Web site that reports on abuses in Egypt's police stations and prisons, credits the Internet with bringing human rights reporting to a mass audience. "Reports that used to collect dust on shelves are now being read by thousands of people," she told CPJ. "You couldn't get people to read this type of material years ago, not even if you printed it and distributed it free of charge. But, online, people encounter it on their favorite blog or news Web site and they read it. It has become mainstream."

And the old mainstream is itself changing. "Today I get many stories from the newspaper, whereas a couple of years ago I had to rely almost exclusively on reports by human rights organizations," Atef said.

Morocco has also seen an increase in human rights reporting. In 2002, the press latched on to the story of Mohamed Ait Sirahal, who was beaten to death in a Marrakesh police station. Sirahal, visiting from his home in France, fell into an argument with a local resident and was arrested. Newspapers unrelentingly covered his family's three-year legal battle to bring the police officer responsible to justice. A verdict in the trial of Mohamed Kharbouch was postponed 15 times, but thanks to the intensity of media coverage, he was finally convicted in 2007. Free on appeal, Kharbouch faces a 10-year prison sentence.

**ONLINE COVERAGE OF HUMAN
RIGHTS IS STARTING TO SEEP
ONTO NEWSPAPER PAGES.**

The Moroccan media's appetite for human rights issues was further whetted when a truth commission began examining abuses committed during the 1961-1999 reign of King Hassan II. Although the hearings of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission ended in 2005, the independent press has continued to report on abuses—and not just under Hassan, but under his successor, Mohammed VI, as well.

A change of regime in Bahrain provided an opportunity for the press to expand human rights reporting. When he came to power in 1999, Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa restored many civil liberties and reinstated parliament, which had been shut down 30 years earlier, in an effort to address the grievances of the majority Shiite population in the Sunni-ruled country. At first, the media dutifully covered the government's reforms, but then emboldened journalists started writing about the opposition, rising political tensions, and Shiite unrest.

When Bahrain's Supreme Criminal Court handed down prison terms to 11 men in July 2008 on charges of rioting in late 2007, the media denounced the lack of due process. In a rare move, they published statements by defense lawyers and the families of the accused who claimed the defendants had been arrested merely for attending a peaceful gathering to mourn the death of Ali Jassim Makki, a man who died during a protest a few days earlier. All 11 men are serving prison terms while the case is pending in an appellate court.

A number of Bahraini newspapers, particularly the daily *Al-Wasat*, covered what came to be known as the Bandargate scandal, an alleged political conspiracy by government officials in Bahrain to stoke strife and further marginalize the Shiite community. The allegations were revealed in September 2006 in a 240-page report produced by the Gulf Centre for Democratic Development. (The press named the scandal after the report's author, Salah al-Bandar.)

"In the past decade, there has been a marked increase in the quantity as well as quality of reporting on human rights violations and also the work of domestic human rights activists," Gamal Eid, director of the Cairo-based Arab Network for

Human Rights Information, told CPJ. “Much of it began online, but we now also see this type of reporting taking place in print.” In Egypt, for instance, the daily *Al-Dustour* devotes a full page each Wednesday to reporting on civil society and human rights. The independent daily *Nadhet Misr* carries an entire page on the same topic every day, and *Al-Mal* devotes a half page to human rights each day.

“This type of journalism has raised awareness among the public—it has had a positive role,” Abdelaziz Nouaydi, human rights lawyer and president of the Moroccan human rights group Adala, told CPJ. In some cases it has also had a positive outcome. In Egypt, police Capt. Islam Nabih and Cpl. Reda Fathi were sentenced in November 2007 to three years in prison for torturing and sodomizing a man in custody. In Iran, in the aftermath of the disputed June 2009 presidential elections, police chief Gen. Ismail Ahmadi Moghaddam conceded that detainees had been tortured while in custody, after numerous online publications, notably *Norooz* and *Sabam News*, published credible reports of rape and abuse of detainees. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei ordered the Kahrizak Prison shut down after the much-publicized deaths of two detainees there.

A HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER SEES A MARKED INCREASE IN THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF REPORTING.

Throughout the region, a new generation of journalists refuses to serve as ciphers at some gray government daily or as on-air mouthpieces for official propaganda. A 2008 survey of 600 journalists in 13 Arab countries by the American University in Cairo found that most believed their primary mission was to drive reform.

“Seventy-five percent of journalists say that their top priority is political and social change,” Lawrence Pintak, lead author of the survey, told CPJ. “And you see this playing out in this more aggressive coverage around human rights issues, whether it’s in Palestine by a Bahraini journalist or whether it’s in Egypt by Egyptian journalists,” said Pintak, who is now founding dean of the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University.

This increased focus on human rights has prompted a backlash from regimes that use government-friendly media to attack individual journalists and outlets. Rights defender Eid notes that the Egyptian daily *Rose al-Yusef* “devotes page 5 to attacking publications, journalists, and civil society organizations that are vested in human rights investigations and reporting.” In Tunisia, government-owned print and electronic media routinely label critical journalists who write about government abuses as “agents of the West” and “traitors.”

Morocco has turned to a politicized court system to muzzle the press. In 2008, the state-run Consultative Council on Human Rights sued *Al-Jarida al-Oula* in an attempt to prevent the daily from publishing public domain testimony from the Equity and Reconciliation Commission. In June 2008, a Rabat court ordered *Al-Jarida al-Oula* to stop publishing victim testimony. The newspaper appealed the ruling even as it continued to publish excerpts describing torture, murders, and forced disappearances. The ruling was upheld by an appeals court in late 2008.

IN A REGIONAL SURVEY, MOST JOURNALISTS SAY THEIR MISSION IS TO DRIVE REFORM.

In Bahrain, journalists faced prosecution for reporting on human rights. Maryam al-Shrooqi, a journalist for *Al-Wasat*, was tried for writing an article about alleged religious discrimination in hiring practices at the Department of Civil Services. The judge dismissed the most serious charges against al-Shrooqi but fined her. Similarly, judicial authorities also sued journalist Lamis Deif after she published a series of articles investigating family court judges and their rulings. “The government has created a culture of fear among reporters and columnists,” Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Center for Human Rights, told CPJ. “Those few reporters who try to write about human rights are marginalized, threatened, and often prosecuted.”

While bloggers and activists are bearing the brunt of the government counterattack, all journalists are feeling the heat. Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, among others, have at times suspended the operations of satellite news channels, particularly Al-Jazeera, for highlighting sensitive human rights, political, or religious issues.

“There was actually more reporting of human rights kinds of issues and democracy kinds of issues a few years ago,” said Marc Lynch, director of the Institute for Middle East Studies at George Washington University. “Over the last year or so governments and the regimes have hit back quite a bit. The general repression of the media, the crackdown on democratic activism across the region have also taken a toll on human rights reporting,” said Lynch, who is well-known in the region for his blogging under the name Abu Aardvark. He believes the satellite channels have become a little less daring in their reporting of late.

Al-Jazeera anchor Mohamed Krichen disagrees. “No, our editorial policy has not changed. We report on human rights cases when they arise. They are an important part of the news, but do not constitute the entirety of our coverage. We are a news organization, and not a human rights group, and our coverage reflects that,” Krichen told CPJ.

“What we have,” said Pintak, a former CBS correspondent in the Middle East, “is governments in a halting, tentative, confused way trying to adapt to this

new landscape. And they are adapting in Egypt by allowing new, semi-independent newspapers to open while at the same time putting pressure on current affairs directors at the satellite channels when they get too far out of line.”

The consensus among those journalists and academics interviewed by CPJ is that any dip in the upward curve of human rights reporting is only temporary.

**AS GOVERNMENTS WAGE
COUNTERATTACKS, HUMAN
RIGHTS REPORTERS ARE
FEELING THE HEAT.**

Countries in the region cannot seal off information from the outside world. Many of these nations embrace trade, so they need to embrace the Internet as well. They also have an overwhelmingly

young population that is increasingly wired and aware of freedoms enjoyed by their contemporaries in other parts of the world.

“This is a very different world from in the ’90s and it’s a world in which governments can no longer completely control the message,” Pintak said. “They can crack down on individual news organizations, they can jail individual reporters, they can harass individual editors, but they can’t stop the flow of information.”

BAHRAIN

BAHRAIN HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES IN IMPROVING ITS HUMAN rights record since political reforms enacted in 2001, particularly concerning universal suffrage and the dismantlement of an abusive state security court system. But some reforms have yet to be fully realized, among them improving political representation for the marginalized Shiite majority and ensuring more equitable standing for women in family courts. The press freedom climate, which had improved with the establishment of seven independent newspapers in the wake of the 2001 reforms, has undergone a gradual deterioration over the past several years. That decline accelerated in 2009 as the government blocked domestic access to more than 1,000 Web sites and pursued politicized court complaints against critical journalists.

Culture and Information Minister Sheikha Mai bint Muhammad Al-Khalifa issued an order in January compelling Internet service providers to block Web sites identified as offensive by the ministry. Despite protests from numerous press freedom groups, including CPJ, the government blocked dozens of sites in the first eight months of the year. The censorship effort escalated in September, when the Ministry of Information ordered the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, the government’s Internet regulator, to block 1,040 more sites, according to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights. Although the government characterized its campaign as being aimed at pornography, CPJ research shows that journalistic blogs, news Web sites, discussion forums, and human rights Web sites were also blocked. Internet users who attempted to reach those pages were met with a screen that read: “This Web site has been blocked for violating regulations and laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain.”

With one of the most Web-connected populations in the region—a third of its residents are online—Bahrain had been home to hundreds of Web sites, according to the Bahrain Center for Human Rights. Among them were about 200 blogs, many focusing on political and social issues and most written anonymously. Bahrain filters sites critical of the government, the ruling family, and Islam, according to August 2009 findings published by OpenNet Initiative, an academic partnership that studies Internet censorship.

The online dichotomy reflects the country’s political development over the

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Country summaries in this chapter were reported and written by Middle East and North Africa Program Coordinator **Mohamed Abdel Dayem**, Research Associate **Mariwan Hama-Saeed**, Middle East Representative **Kamel Eddine Labidi**, and freelance writer **Lilia Bellahsene**.

past decade: Steps toward reform and transparency have been followed by steps back toward repression. Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa replaced his more conservative father in 1999 as emir and proclaimed himself king in 2002. In response to decades-long demands from the country's dispossessed Shiite majority, he led

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Authorities block Web sites critical of the government, the king, and Islam.
- » Officials pursue politicized court complaints against critical reporters.

1,040

Web sites that the Ministry of Information ordered censored in September.

KEY STATISTIC

as human rights, corruption, and discrimination against Shiite citizens. Facing the emergence of critical news media, the government embraced legislative tools to suppress content.

Despite constitutional guarantees for press freedom, government agencies continued to enforce the heavy-handed Press and Publications Law of 2002, which prescribes prison terms of up to five years for material considered an affront to Islam or the king, and content perceived as undermining state security or the monarchy. The appointed upper chamber of parliament has twice proposed press law amendments—most recently in 2008—intended to mitigate its harshest provisions, but an elected lower chamber dominated by conservative elements has consistently turned back those proposals.

Government officials pursued politicized criminal complaints against two journalists who had produced investigative reports on alleged public corruption. In each case, the government appeared less intent on jailing the journalists than on harassing them through repeated court summonses.

Maryam al-Shrooqi, a reporter for the independent daily *Al-Wasat*, was found guilty in September on insult charges stemming from a 2008 article that alleged religious discrimination in the hiring policies of the Department of Civil Services. The department had filed a criminal complaint, accusing her of insult and the more serious charges of fabrication and defamation. The Supreme Criminal Court eventually dismissed the most serious charges and fined al-Shrooqi 50 dinars (US\$133). The court also ordered *Al-Wasat* to print a summary of the

the institution of significant reforms in 2001 that included the release of political prisoners, the return of exiles, and the drafting of a new constitution that resurrected parliament after three decades of dormancy. After the reforms of 2001, Bahrain's media underwent a revival as five Arabic and two English newspapers began tackling sensitive topics such

verdict in the same place in the paper as the original article. An appeal was pending in late year.

Lamees Dhaif, a columnist for the privately owned daily *Al-Waqt*, was also summoned to court on charges of insulting the judiciary in a series, "The Dossier of Great Shame," published in February. The pieces detailed alleged bias against women in family courts, reflecting one of the unfulfilled political reforms of 2001. The Supreme Judicial Council, the judiciary's highest administrative body, had lodged a criminal complaint against Dhaif after she refused a judiciary official's demands to write an apology and an article praising the court system. The prosecution was suspended in September but can be resurrected at any time.

EGYPT

AUTHORITIES FOLLOWED FAMILIAR TACTICS TO CONTROL NEWS MEDIA, pursuing politicized court cases, imposing fines, using regulatory tools, and harassing journalists. With Egypt seeing a burgeoning community of journalistic bloggers, authorities moved aggressively to monitor and control online activity. At least three online journalists were jailed when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1.

In February, a judge in Cairo fined five journalists for violating a court order banning news coverage of the murder trial of Egyptian businessman Hisham Talaat Mostafa, who was eventually convicted in the killing of Lebanese singer Suzanne Tamim. News reports said that fines of 10,000 pounds (US\$1,803) were levied against editor Magdi al-Galad and reporters Yusri al-Badri and Faruq al-Dissuqi of the independent daily *Al-Masry al-Youm*, along with editor Abbas al-Tarabili and reporter Ibrahim Qaraa of the opposition *Al-Wafd*. Sayyid Abu Zaid, lawyer for the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate, told CPJ that similar charges had been filed, but dropped, against the state-owned dailies *Al-Ahram* and *Akhabar Al-Youm*.

After highly publicized proceedings, a Cairo appellate court in February struck down one-year jail terms against four editors but upheld 20,000-pound (US\$3,540) fines against each of them, according to news reports. The four editors had been charged in 2007 with publishing "false information likely to disturb public order" in connection with stories that raised questions about President Hosni Mubarak's health at a time when he had been out of public view. The fines were imposed against Ibrahim Eissa of the daily *Al-Dustour*, Adel Hamouda of the weekly *Al-Fajr*, Wael el-Abrashi of the weekly *Sawt al-Umma*, and Abdel Halim Kandil of the weekly *Al-Karama*.

A principal in the Cairo News Company, which provides production ser-

vices to news outlets such as Al-Jazeera and the BBC, won acquittal in a politicized prosecution, according to the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information. Nader Gohar, the company's managing director, had faced charges of operating broadcasting equipment without authorization. The prosecution was thought to have been prompted by client Al-Jazeera's coverage of 2008 labor protests in the northern industrial city of Al-Mahalla al-Kobra, which included footage of protesters tearing down a poster of Mubarak, CPJ research showed. Fined in 2008, Gohar won acquittal on appeal in 2009, defense attorney Khaled el-Deeb told CPJ.

With legal and financial pressures facing traditional media, many Egyptian reporters turned to new media tools such as blogs, the video-sharing site YouTube, and the micro-blog Twitter. The government, in turn, has aggressively monitored online information and harassed bloggers, CPJ found in a September special report, "Middle East Bloggers: The Street Leads Online." CPJ identified Egypt as one of the region's worst oppressors of online information. Authorities used longstanding repressive tools such as the press law, penal code, and emergency law, which criminalize reporting that the government deems "false" or against "the national interest." Penalties can range as high as five years in prison and as much as 30,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$5,220) in fines.

Authorities also relied on Web-specific regulators such as the Directorate for Computer and Internet Crimes. Egyptian blogger Mostafa El Naggar wrote that the office has engaged in "relentless pursuit of bloggers and citizen journalists, invading their privacy, [and] hacking into their personal accounts."

Internet traffic in Egypt passes through servers controlled by the state, facilitating the monitoring of content, according to OpenNet Initiative, an academic partnership that studies online censorship. Gamal Eid, executive director of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, said the information gathered while monitoring digital traffic is routinely shared among state agencies and used to identify targets for legal action. "You know you are being watched," blogger Nora Younis told WorldFocus, a U.S. online and broadcast program. "You know your calls are being tapped. The government is coping with technology, so now

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government is among the region's worst oppressors of online expression.
- » Several editors fined for reporting on the president and other sensitive topics.

KEY STATISTIC

3 Online journalists imprisoned as of December 1, 2009.

we have a new police department called the Internet police. And they say they are after Internet [fraud and theft], but at the end of the day they are the ones who deal with the bloggers."

Blogger Dia' Gad was arrested in February and held incommunicado by state security agents after writing critically about Egypt's border closings with Gaza and restrictions on humanitarian aid, according to reports by Amnesty International and other human rights groups. Gad was released without charge the next month after his case sparked international outcry. Three other bloggers were not as fortunate.

Mosad Suleiman, known online as Mosad Abu Fagr, was still being held in late year despite his acquittal in February 2008 on trumped-up antistate charges. At least 13 judicial orders were issued directing that the journalist be released, but the Interior Ministry used the Emergency Law to circumvent the directives. Immediately after each order of release, the ministry countered with its own administrative order directing Suleiman's continued detention. The provisions of the Emergency Law are such that the government can use the strategy an unlimited number of times. Suleiman wrote about social and political issues affecting the Bedouin community in Sinai on his blog, *Wedna N'ish* (We Want to Live).

Blogger Hani Nazeer Aziz, who wrote about Coptic minority issues, the state security apparatus, and local religious officials, was also being held in late year under the Emergency Law. Defense lawyers said they had been prevented from visiting Aziz on multiple occasions, and that their client had been mistreated in prison. All of the material on Aziz's blog had been deleted by an unidentified third party.

Abdel Karim Suleiman, known online as Karim Amer, was serving a four-year prison term imposed in February 2007, when a court in Alexandria convicted him of insulting Islam and President Mubarak. The verdict was the first in which an Egyptian blogger was convicted explicitly for his work, CPJ research shows. In November 2007, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information and the Hisham Mubarak Center for Law reported that Suleiman had been severely beaten by another prisoner and a guard.

Other online journalists faced harassment. Wael Abbas, a popular and award-winning blogger, was briefly detained at the Cairo airport in June after returning from a trip to Sweden. Abbas wrote that his passport and laptop were confiscated and that he was told that "his name appeared on a state security list." Abbas has been the target of constant harassment from government officials after posting videos of police brutality on his blog in 2006. The same week, the *Daily News* reported that authorities briefly detained without charge three other bloggers: Magdi Saad and Abd El Rahman Ayyash, who were also members of the banned opposition group Muslim Brotherhood, and Ahmed Abu Khalil.

Conflicts within the profession continued to hinder press freedom. In October, the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate considered whether to expel Hala Mustafa, editor-in-chief of the quarterly magazine *Democratiya*, after she met with Israeli Ambassador Shalom Cohen in Cairo, according to international news reports. The Egyptian Journalists Syndicate's ban against traveling to Israel or meeting with Israelis is considered by many leading journalists as a "weapon put in place by the syndicate" to control its members' activities, Salah Eissa, editor of the cultural weekly *Al-Qahira*, told The Associated Press. The case was pending in late year.

Foreign journalists have also been targeted. In October, authorities prevented Swedish freelance reporter Per Bjorklund from entering the country, claiming that he was planning to orchestrate a pro-Palestinian protest, according to news reports. Bjorklund denied any intention of participating in or planning a protest. News reports said the action may have been motivated by Bjorklund's extensive coverage of Egyptian labor issues.

IRAN

AMID THE GREATEST NATIONAL POLITICAL UPHEAVAL SINCE THE 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran launched a full-scale assault on the media and the opposition. In mid-June, mass protests erupted in response to official election results showing incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad winning by a large margin against his main opposition challenger, reformist Mir-Hossein Mousavi. The government responded with a wide-ranging and cruel campaign to suppress dissent. As protests against perceived electoral fraud spiraled into mass demonstrations, Iranian authorities threw dozens of journalists behind bars (where many were reportedly tortured), shuttered and censored news outlets, and barred foreign journalists from reporting. During the protests and crackdown, blogs and social media sites became front-line news sources. The crackdown increased the level of repression in a regime already hostile toward the press, and followed the months-long imprisonment of an Iranian-American freelance journalist, Roxana Saberi.

Saberi's detention, as well as the arrests of three American hikers who strayed across the Iraqi border in July, played out against a backdrop of international diplomatic wrangling over Iran's nuclear program, leading some to surmise that Iran's authorities might see U.S. detainees as useful tools in negotiations. While Iranian officials have long argued that the country's nuclear program is for civilian electricity generation only, and that uranium enrichment is Iran's right under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, international policy-makers have grown increasingly concerned that Iran's enrichment program is aimed at weapons pro-

duction. The U.S. administration of President Barack Obama has alternated diplomatic overtures to Iran with threats of punitive measures such as tighter international sanctions.

Signs that Iranian authorities would seek to stifle the free flow of information about the presidential election emerged nearly immediately. SMS text message service was disrupted starting hours before the polls opened on June 12, and mobile phone service was shut down on June 13, the day election results were released. In the days after the disputed vote, Iranian security forces and members of the paramilitary Basij militia assaulted and harassed journalists attempting to cover escalating public demonstrations. Authorities clamped down on foreign media coverage, jamming the BBC's Persian television and radio service and the U.S. government-funded Radio Farda, and shutting the Tehran bureau of Dubai-based, pan-Arab Al-Arabiya television indefinitely after accusing the station of bias.

Foreign journalists were ordered not to cover the protests or any "news events" not announced by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Several journalists working for foreign media were detained and their tapes, equipment, and other work products were confiscated. Press cards were declared invalid, and Iranian authorities rejected requests by foreign journalists to extend their one-week

visas. Foreign journalists who had been invited by the government to cover the elections left the country as their visas expired, or were expelled even before this could happen.

Restricting the foreign press appeared to serve the dual purpose of limiting coverage of internal upheaval and the

» Dozens of journalists are detained in massive post-election crackdown.

» Numerous critical newspapers, Web sites censored or shut down.

23

Journalists imprisoned as of December 1, 2009.

graphic abuse of protesters, while pinning the unrest on Western interference in Iran's internal affairs. On June 19, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called foreign media "evil" and accused them of attempting to divide the people of Iran. These accusations fed into wider official allegations that protests stemmed from a conspiracy abetted by the CIA, Britain, Israel, and exiled Iranian groups.

Five days after the vote, two Tehran-based newspapers were barred from publishing by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. The daily *Hayat e No* had planned to run a front-page article about the protests, and the daily *Aftab e Yazd* would have had a front-page picture of defeated reformist candidate Mousavi. At least three other local newspapers didn't appear on news-

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

stands; newspaper staff cited technical problems, but it was unclear whether self-censorship played a role. The following week, the Association of Iranian Journalists reported that security agents were visiting printing houses to censor newspapers. (The association itself was later shut down.) According to the BBC Persian Service, 180 Iranian journalists signed a petition calling censorship “unprecedented” and stating that “even during wartime there was not this much pressure on publications.” Sporadic newspaper censorship continued through year’s end. In October, authorities revoked the licenses of three reformist papers: Tehran-based dailies *Farhang-e Aashti* and *Arman*, and the Shiraz-based daily *Tableel-e Rooz*.

Iranian bloggers have long been regional trailblazers in using the Internet to get around official censorship. Even so, online journalists have frequently been targeted by the authorities; in April, CPJ named Iran one of the world’s 10 Worst Countries to Be a Blogger. During the elections, Iranian authorities recognized that Internet-based media could pose a threat. Authorities blocked social networking sites inside Iran such as Twitter, DailyMotion, and Facebook, as well as reformist Web sites and YouTube, where international visitors could glimpse raw digital footage—some recorded by cell phone—of security forces and militia members shooting at and assaulting protesters. Some news reports said authorities also imposed bandwidth restrictions that made it difficult to upload materials such as pictures or videos of the protests. In spite of these efforts and the imprisonment of many Iranian bloggers in the aftermath of the elections, Internet journalism continued to build momentum. Writing on the CPJ Blog in October, Nikahang Kowsar, an Iranian blogger living in Canada, described an explosion of Iranian Web sites where critical information was being shared. He noted: “If in 2003 people enjoyed blogging to share ideas and thoughts, today it’s a war. It’s a struggle.”

In the weeks after the protests, thousands of activists and supporters of reformist candidates were detained by the Iranian security apparatus. So were more than 90 journalists and media workers, according to CPJ research. Those detained included bloggers, photographers, newspaper editors, reporters, filmmakers, media activists, cartoonists, producers, and editorialists who had been critical toward the regime or supportive of reformist candidates. Many were seized by intelligence agents who raided and searched their houses. *Kamaeh Sabz*, a reformist newspaper owned by Mousavi, saw much of its staff rounded up by authorities during the crackdown.

At least 23 journalists were still being jailed on December 1, when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census of imprisoned journalists, making Iran the world’s second-worst jailer of the press. (Only China imprisoned more.) Even as the government released a trickle of journalists, others continued to be arrested,

among them former International Press Freedom Award recipient Mashallah Shamsolvaezin and the prominent writer Emadeddin Baghi.

Journalists were among the 100 detainees who faced a mass, televised judicial proceeding in August on vague antistate accusations, including “endangering national security” and “involvement with foreign powers in order to topple the regime.” The mass hearings were riddled with procedural irregularities, CPJ research indicated, and were open only to state-owned media. On August 25, about 20 of the defendants, including at least four journalists, were accused in a Revolutionary Court in Tehran of attempting “a soft coup d’etat,” and of “lying” and spreading “rumors of fraud in the election,” Iranian state broadcaster Press TV reported. Four defense lawyers said they had been barred from attending one hearing; one reported being threatened with arrest when attempting to enter the hall.

CPJ expressed deep concern about the health of the detained journalists and the conditions in which they were being held. Iranian authorities released “confessions” by several of the detained journalists that appeared to have been coerced. The journalists’ lawyers were denied access to their clients in prison, while police chief Gen. Ismail Ahmadi Moghaddam publicly admitted that detainees had been tortured in custody. The wife of one detainee, Ahmad Zaid-Abadi, was allowed to see her husband only after he had spent 53 days in custody, during which he had gone on a 17-day hunger strike. Speaking to the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle, Zaid-Abadi’s wife described the 1-by-1.5-meter room in which he was held, alone, during his hunger strike as “a place like a grave.” In November, Zaid-Abadi was convicted on antistate charges and sentenced to six years in prison, five years in exile in Khorasan province, and a lifetime ban on social and political activity.

Nearly all of the journalists detained in the aftermath of the elections were working for local media outlets, including Web sites and newspapers affiliated with reformist candidates, according to CPJ research. A handful, however, were working for international media. These included a freelance photographer for Getty Images, Majid Saeedi, who had worked in Iran for years, and Iason Athanasiadis, a Greek freelance journalist who had been covering the elections and their aftermath for *The Washington Times*. A third was *Newsweek*’s Tehran correspondent, Maziar Bahari, a Canadian-Iranian national arrested on June 21. Security agents also took Bahari’s laptop and several videotapes, the newsweekly reported. The three were eventually released: Athanasiadis in early July, Saeedi in August, and Bahari in October. CPJ and others campaigned vigorously for the release of these and all detained journalists, leading petition efforts and publicity campaigns, and working behind the scenes through diplomatic channels.

The journalists arrested in the crackdown were added to the ranks of at least

six who were already in Iranian jails at the time of the election. One of the six, freelance journalist Massoud Kurdpour, was released from Mahabad Central Prison in northwestern Iran in early August after completing a one-year jail term for “propaganda against the regime.” Another, Canadian-Iranian blogger Hossein Derakhshan continued to be held in late year. Known in Iran as the “Blogfather” for his pioneering Internet commentary, Derakhshan was detained in November 2008, ostensibly for comments he made about a key cleric. Derakhshan’s whereabouts and legal status were unknown in late year.

In late January, Iran jailed an Iranian-American journalist, Roxana Saberi, at Tehran’s notorious Evin Prison, where political prisoners are often held. Saberi, 32, had worked inside Iran for National Public Radio, the BBC, ABC News, and other international media outlets since 2003, until her press credentials were revoked in 2006. According to NPR, Saberi continued to file short news items with government permission. In April, she was convicted of espionage and sentenced after a closed, one-day trial to eight years in prison. In early May, after a five-hour hearing, an appeals court reduced her punishment to a two-year suspended sentence (and a five-year ban on reporting from Iran). Saberi’s espionage sentence was overturned, although the court upheld her conviction for “having classified information,” defense lawyer Saleh Nikbakht told CPJ. Nikbakht said the appeals hearing focused on a research paper on U.S. tactics, produced in early 2003 by a center for strategic studies within the Iranian government, which officers found during a search of Saberi’s apartment in Tehran. Defense lawyers rejected prosecutors’ contention that the paper was classified; Saberi told judges she had picked up the paper at a public conference in Tehran. Saberi’s legal team also maintained that Saberi’s “confession,” a basis of the prosecution’s case, had been coerced and not put in writing, Nikbakht said. CPJ’s vigorous international advocacy on Saberi’s behalf included a petition signed by more than 10,000 people worldwide.

In July, a Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted local journalist Saeed Matin-Pour on a charge of having “relations with foreigners and propagating against the regime.” He was initially arrested in May 2007 after visiting Turkey but was released on bail. He was rearrested amid the 2009 crackdown, sentenced to eight years in jail, and sent immediately to Evin Prison. CPJ condemned the sentence and the vagueness of the charge.

At least two journalists have died at Evin Prison in the last six years under circumstances that have not been fully explained, CPJ research shows, including Omidreza Mirsayafi, a blogger who died in March while serving a 30-month sentence on a charge of insulting Iran’s religious authorities. In 2003, Iranian-Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi died of a brain hemorrhage that resulted from a beating while behind bars.

On July 31, Iranian forces detained three young Americans who strayed over the border into Iran while hiking in a resort area on the Iraqi Kurdistan border. Sarah Shourd is a writer and teacher; Joshua Fattal is an environmentalist; and Shane Bauer is a freelance journalist based in Damascus, Syria. On November 11, Iranian authorities announced they would be charged with espionage. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton publicly criticized the hikers’ arrests, stating the charges against them were baseless. Some news reports speculated the Americans might be held for diplomatic bargaining purposes.

IRAQ

FOUR IRAQI JOURNALISTS WERE KILLED BECAUSE OF THEIR WORK as the press continued to face great challenges and risks. Nevertheless, the death toll dropped to its lowest point since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003, and, for the first time in six years, Iraq was not the world’s deadliest nation for journalists. (It was replaced by the Philippines.) No journalists or media workers were reported abducted, reflecting another steep drop from prior years.

The marked decline in media fatalities and abductions was consistent with an overall drop in violence in recent years. Analysts cited a variety of factors, including the increasing participation of Sunni groups and other sectarian elements in the political process and the shift in security responsibilities from the U.S. military to Iraqi forces. By June 30, as part of an agreement between the United States and Iraq, U.S. troops withdrew from all Iraqi cities and towns, handing control of security to the Iraqi government.

“The security situation continued to improve because the political parties and insurgents kept losing their armed powers,” said Ziad al-Ajili, director of the Journalistic Freedoms Observatory, JFO, a local press freedom group. “The improvement in security has reflected positively on the safety of journalists in Iraq.” Foreign correspondents agreed. “Apparently journalists are no longer a specific target,” Quil Lawrence, NPR’s Baghdad bureau chief, told CPJ. Continuing a years-long trend, Iraqi journalists

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Fatalities and abductions plummet as security situation improves.
- » Prime minister, others file lawsuits to harass media. Kurdish courts jail six journalists.

KEY STATISTIC

4 Journalists killed in connection to their work, the lowest tally since the war began in 2003.

played the dominant role in covering developments in 2009; only the largest Western news outlets continued to maintain bureaus or a full-time presence in the nation.

But improvements in security were a matter of degree as deadly violence continued to strike in Baghdad, Mosul, and other cities. Devastating insurgent bombings in August, October, and December targeted the heart of the Iraqi government—including the ministries of finance and foreign affairs—and left hundreds dead. The bombings, reminders of the fragility of the security situation, caused some late-year re-examination among journalists. “For about a year people had been on the assumption that things were getting quieter; therefore journalists were moving more and more freely,” Lawrence said. “But since the bombings in August, people are reassessing how safe things are.”

As was the case in 2008, all of the journalists killed in 2009 were Iraqis. All four were killed in areas where tensions remained high between sectarian groups. Haidar Hashim Suhail, a correspondent for the Iraqi-owned, Cairo-based Al-Baghdadia satellite television network, and cameraman Suhaib Adnan were among more than 30 people killed in a suicide bombing on March 10 in Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad in Anbar province. Four other journalists were injured in the attack. The journalists had accompanied Brig. Gen. Mard Abdul Hassan, a high-ranking Ministry of Interior official, to a tribal reconciliation gathering. The bomber detonated the explosive when the official was meeting with residents on a busy street, journalists told CPJ. Abdul Hassan survived.

On May 31, Alaa Abdel-Wahab, a sports reporter for Al-Baghdadia, was killed in Mosul when a bomb attached to his car exploded, according to CPJ sources. Sultan Jerjis, a sports journalist with Al-Rasheed radio, was injured in the attack. In a similar but unrelated attack the same day, two staffers of the state-run Al-Iraqiya satellite channel were injured when a bomb attached to their car exploded in the Al-Azamiya neighborhood in Baghdad, according to local press reports.

In October, Orhan Hijran, a cameraman with Al-Rasheed television, was killed when a bomb exploded in front of his house in the Al-Khadhr neighborhood of southwestern Kirkuk, Bureau Chief Jawdat Assaf told CPJ. Roadside bombs often struck the southwestern area of Kirkuk, which was frequently traveled by the U.S. military, local journalists told CPJ. Assaf said the area where Hijran was killed included a police checkpoint and had been the target of more than a dozen roadside bombs. Kirkuk, at the center of oil production in northern Iraq, is home to a mixed population of Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, and Assyrians, and remained a flashpoint for violence.

Iraqi authorities failed to address impunity in journalist murders, one of the

many brutal legacies of the conflict. Of the 140 journalists killed in Iraq since 2003, at least 89 were targeted for murder. By year’s end, Iraqi authorities had yet to bring a single killer to justice in any of those murders. Iraq ranked first worldwide on CPJ’s Impunity Index, which calculates the number of unsolved journalist murders as a percentage of the nation’s population.

For many journalists, government harassment, assaults, and legal action supplanted deadly insurgent violence as the most frequent work-related risk. “Officials don’t want journalists to write about things such as security issues, violations of human rights, lack of basic services, and corruption,” JFO director al-Ajili said. “They are imposing restrictions on journalists—and the direction they are taking is more toward authoritarianism.”

Numerous journalists were harassed or assaulted by police during provincial elections in late January, according to local and international news reports. In Basra, guards at a correctional facility assaulted about 15 reporters and broke equipment when voting started, local and international news agencies reported. The guards claimed that photographers had taken pictures of inmates’ faces, according to news reports.

Iraqi officials also brought legal action against domestic and international journalists. In February, a lawyer for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki filed a lawsuit against Ayad al-Zamli, owner of the German-based Arabic Web site *Kitabat*, and a writer who had written under the pseudonym of Ali Hussein, in connection with an article describing alleged nepotism in the prime minister’s office. The lawsuit demanded 1 billion dinars (US\$865,380) in damages, according to a copy of the complaint. After local and international outcry, al-Maliki withdrew the lawsuit in May.

That same month, the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS) filed a defamation complaint against the London-based *Guardian* newspaper for an article in which sources characterized the prime minister as “increasingly autocratic,” the paper reported. In November, in a move that drew condemnation from domestic and international observers, a Baghdad court ordered the paper to pay 100 million dinars (US\$86,000) in damages. The paper said it would appeal.

One piece of legislation, while ostensibly benefitting journalists, also raised questions. A journalist protection measure—written in conjunction with the Iraqi Journalists’ Syndicate and pending in late year—was designed to aid the press by providing compensation for injured journalists, ensuring security for those under threat, and ensuring the right to obtain government information. But local and international press freedom advocates expressed concerns about several provisions in the draft. One article, for example, narrowly defined a journalist as someone who both works for an established news outlet and is affiliated with the Iraqi Journalists’ Syndicate. The provision was seen by some as imposing

a licensing system on journalists.

Faruq Abdulqadir, the minister of communications, conceded in a July interview with U.S. government-funded Al-Hurra television that the government planned to regulate online publications. In a subsequent statement, the Ministry of Communications said vaguely that it planned to block “some Web sites that affect the manners and the security of the country.” Majeed Hameed, director general for the ministry’s Internet section, said in the statement that the government would consider Web monitoring tactics used by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as models. To varying degrees, both countries have restrictive online regulations.

Journalists spoke out against government intimidation. In June, CPJ and JFO sent a letter to al-Maliki expressing concerns about increasing official harassment. In the first six months of the year, the two organizations documented more than 70 cases of harassment and assault against journalists in Iraq. On August 14, hundreds of journalists, academics, and press freedom advocates demonstrated on Baghdad’s Al-Mutanabi Street to protest increasing government restrictions, according to local and international press reports.

The press faced heightened restrictions even in the relatively secure northern provinces controlled by the Kurdish Regional Government. A press law that took effect in October 2008 was lauded at the time for omitting prison penalties for press offenses such as defamation, but the language of the measure was vague enough to be open to different interpretations in court. CPJ documented six cases in which police and judges in Kurdistan briefly jailed journalists under the 1969 Iraqi penal code. In a letter sent in May to Nechirvan Barzani, then the Kurdistan Regional Government’s prime minister, CPJ expressed concern over poor implementation of the Kurdish press law.

Jassim Muhammad, a reporter and a director of the media division of the Kurdistan Islamic Union in Zakho, an Islamist party with close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, spent six days in January in a prison run by the Asaish, or security service, after he briefly launched a television station without a license, he told CPJ. Asaish charged him under the 1969 Iraqi penal code for “disobeying official orders”; Muhammad was acquitted in May.

In another case, Kawa Garmiani, a reporter with *Khawn* magazine, spent five days in prison in January in connection with defamation lawsuits filed by government agencies in Kalar, southeast of Sulaymaniyah. He had quoted sources as saying that the grounds of a Kalar hospital had become a favorite spot for a romantic rendezvous, he told CPJ.

A Kurdish court found that a local newspaper defamed national and regional leaders when it printed a translated version of a critical report by a U.S. analyst in 2008. In March, a court in Sulaymaniyah fined *Hawlati*, the region’s most popular

newspaper, 10 million dinars (US\$8,653) and Abid Aref, its former editor, 3 million dinars (US\$2,590). The report, by Michael Rubin of the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, was highly critical of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, who also headed the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan party, and Massoud Barzani, president of Iraqi Kurdistan. Rubin questioned U.S. strategic relations with Iraqi Kurdistan, pointing out undemocratic governance and rampant corruption.

In April, Kurdish regional authorities charged three people with plotting to murder Ahmed Mira, editor-in-chief of the critical Sulaymaniyah-based *Livin* magazine, Mira and his lawyer, Othman Sidiq, told CPJ. The news of the plot came a few months after unidentified gunmen killed Soran Mama Hama, a *Livin* reporter in Kirkuk. In August, a criminal court in Sulaymaniyah found two suspects guilty of plotting to kill Mira and sentenced them to six years in prison.

One journalist was seriously wounded by U.S. military fire in January. Hadil Emad, 25, an editor for Biladi television, was on her way home from work when she was shot near a checkpoint at Al-Jadriyya Bridge in Baghdad, according to local and international news reports. A U.S. military statement claimed she had “acted suspiciously.”

The U.S. military continued to hold a freelance photographer without charge or due process. Ibrahim Jassam was detained during a September 2008 raid at his home in Mahmoodiya, south of Baghdad, according to local and international news reports. In November 2008, the Iraqi Central Criminal Court ruled there was no evidence to hold Jassam and ordered the U.S. military to release him. U.S. military authorities rejected the court order, saying that Jassam “continued to pose a serious threat to the security and stability of Iraq.” Chief of Public Affairs Maj. Neal Fisher told CPJ that Jassam and about 15,000 other detainees would be released in accordance with a “ranking based on their assessed threat” level. CPJ sought Jassam’s release in two letters to U.S. President Barack Obama. Over the course of the war, the U.S. military has detained at least 13 journalists for prolonged periods without charge, according to CPJ research. All of the others were released without charges being substantiated.

The journalist who caused an international spectacle when he threw a pair of shoes at then-U.S. President George W. Bush was convicted of assault against a public official. Muntadhar al-Zaidi, a correspondent for Al-Baghdadia satellite television, was sentenced to a one-year prison term in February. Al-Zaidi, who tossed the shoes during a December 2008 press conference, was released in September for good behavior. Al-Zaidi told the press that he had suffered beatings, whippings, electric shocks, and simulated drowning at the hands of officials and guards.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

AS THE YEAR BEGAN, THE ISRAELI MILITARY WAGED A GROUND OFFENSIVE into the Gaza Strip in response to a series of Hamas rocket attacks on Israeli territory. A massive Israeli air bombardment preceded the ground action. During the monthlong conflict, airstrikes by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) destroyed the headquarters of a Hamas-controlled television station, Al-Aqsa TV, struck at least three other buildings housing news media, and injured several local journalists attempting to cover the assault. At the same time, Israeli authorities largely barred foreign journalists' access to Gaza with restrictions imposed in early November 2008 and tightened after the start of the Israeli offensive.

By the time Israeli forces withdrew on January 21, 13 Israelis and more than 1,000 Palestinians had been killed, according to figures released by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza and the IDF. Israel's blanket news media restrictions severely limited coverage of the Gaza offensive and contravened a ruling by the Israeli Supreme Court as well as international legal principles. The Foreign Press Association in Jerusalem declared in a statement that "the unprecedented denial of access to Gaza for the world's media amounts to a severe violation of press freedom and puts the state of Israel in the company of a handful of regimes around the world which regularly keep journalists from doing their jobs." Only 15 journalists, handpicked by the Israeli military and embedded with Israeli troops, were officially permitted to enter the Gaza Strip during the war. (In the waning days of the conflict, a handful of international journalists managed to reach Gaza through the Egyptian-administered Rafah Crossing, either by sneaking across or persuading Egyptian guards to let them through.) A small number of international journalists who had been in Gaza before the start of the offensive remained there throughout the fighting.

The press restrictions were part of a massive public relations battle over coverage in the international press. Israeli officials emphasized Hamas rocket attacks and the reported use of human shields, while Arab television stations continu-

ously ran footage of Gaza casualties. *The New York Times* observed that as hundreds of foreign journalists who traveled to Israel to cover the war were repeatedly barred from crossing the border, reporters "waited in clusters away from direct contact with any fighting or Palestinian suffering, but with full access to Israeli political and military commentators eager to show them around southern Israel, where Hamas rockets have been terrorizing civilians." Daniel Seaman, director of Israel's Government Press Office, told the *Times*, "Any journalist who enters Gaza becomes a fig leaf and front for the Hamas terror organization, and I see no reason why we should help that." Amid the ban, Palestinian journalists working for local and international news organizations came under frequent attack as they brought the news of the IDF's military assault to audiences worldwide. The mobility of many of these Palestinian journalists was already limited by the lack of Israeli media accreditation.

On January 25, in response to a lawsuit brought by the Foreign Press Association, the Israeli Supreme Court overturned the ban on foreign journalists' entering Gaza. A previous Supreme Court ruling, issued on December 31, 2008, had instructed the government to grant 12 journalists entry into Gaza each time the Erez Crossing on the northern end of the Strip was opened; the government, however, failed to carry out the court's directive. Even after the January 25 ruling, Israeli authorities declined to commit publicly to the free movement of journalists throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Long after the Gaza offensive ended, the battle over international opinion continued in the form of a diplomatic standoff over how to handle the findings of a U.N. fact-finding mission to Gaza. The mission's 575-page report, known as the Goldstone report after its director, South African Justice Richard Goldstone, was released in September. It found that both Israeli security forces and Hamas militants had committed serious war crimes and breaches of humanitarian law during the Gaza conflict, possibly amounting to crimes against humanity. Among other findings, the Goldstone report stated that Israeli soldiers had deliberately targeted civilians in Gaza. (Israeli authorities denied targeting civilians, although they acknowledged collateral civilian casualties.) The report set off an international furor, with opponents vehemently accusing the mission of anti-Israel bias, and the Arab League lobbying for its adoption by the U.N. Security Council. The U.S. House of Representatives condemned the report in a resolution. For many, the debate over the report's factual findings underscored the need for broader journalistic access in Gaza.

Local and international media facilities came under IDF fire on at least four occasions after Israel began its military offensive on December 27, 2008. During that time, the IDF also took over the frequencies of Al-Aqsa TV and Sawt al-Sha'b radio multiple times to beam Israeli military propaganda. On January

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Israel bars international press access to Gaza fighting.
- » Fatah, Hamas detain, harass media perceived as biased.

KEY STATISTIC

4 News media buildings in Gaza hit by Israeli airstrikes.

5, the IDF bombed the offices of the Hamas-affiliated *Al-Risala* newsweekly, according to regional news agencies. On January 9, the IDF hit the rooftop of Gaza City's Al-Johara Tower, which housed more than 20 international news organizations. Al-Jazeera reported that at least one journalist was injured while filing a report from the roof.

On January 15, the IDF fired at least one missile at a Gaza City building, Al-Shuruq Tower, which housed more than a dozen international news and production companies, including Reuters, Fox News, and the Dubai-based television station Al-Arabiya. Two journalists working for Abu Dhabi TV were hospitalized with head and torso injuries. The blast also destroyed power generators and forced staff to evacuate the building. Multiple news organizations reported that they had provided the Israeli military with coordinates for their offices. Reuters also noted that the Israeli military had given the news agency numerous assurances that it would not become a target. An Israeli military spokesman told Reuters that Hamas militants had taken over a media office in the area. CPJ research found the IDF accusations of a militant takeover vague and uncorroborated by witnesses. Reuters publicly disputed the claim.

In April, CPJ wrote to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urging the Israeli government to examine the press restrictions and military strikes on media facilities that had occurred during the Israeli offensive in Gaza and to bring official policies and practices in line with international standards. In particular, CPJ urged Israeli authorities not to impose blanket media restrictions in the future, to conduct immediate and thorough investigations into the apparent targeting of news media facilities during the conflict, and to make the findings public.

In June, months after the Gaza conflict had ended, an Israeli court sentenced two television journalists to two months in jail on charges of breaching the military censorship law during the offensive. Khader Shaheen, a correspondent for the Iranian satellite television news station Al-Alam, and his producer, Muhammad Sarhan, remained free on appeal, according to their lawyers. They had been arrested in January and held for 10 days on charges that they reported Israeli military movements the previous month. The military censorship law enables authorities to determine what material may not be published; local and foreign journalists are bound by this law as a condition of operating in Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territory. CPJ research indicated that Shaheen and Sarhan had reported the same news as many other journalists. CPJ protested the Israeli court ruling against Shaheen and Sarhan and called on the courts to overturn their sentence.

In the Palestinian territories, the rift between Fatah, once the main party of the Palestinian national movement, and the Islamist faction Hamas widened after a short-lived coalition fell apart in June 2007. Hamas consolidated control of the Gaza Strip while the Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas re-

tained Fatah rule in the West Bank. Journalists operating in the Palestinian territories were subject to harassment and censorship by Hamas officials in Gaza and by Palestinian Authority officials in the West Bank. Each party maintained a ban on the distribution of publications they perceived as partisan, and they detained numerous journalists, generally for short periods, with a few held for days at a time.

In late January, the Palestinian Authority detained two journalists working for the London-based Al-Quds television station in the West Bank. Nablus correspondent Samer Khuaira was arrested by the authority's Preventive Security Service and accused of having bias toward Hamas, which he denied. Khuaira told CPJ he spent a week in solitary confinement in Al-Junaid Prison in Nablus before he was transferred to a general holding cell. He was released in early March. Colleague Ahmad Bekawi, a correspondent in Jenin, was arrested after being called to the offices of Military Intelligence, and was held at the same prison until mid-April. Also in late January, Issam al-Rimawi, a cameraman with the Palestinian Authority-aligned Palestinian News Agency, was picked up by security forces, held at Beitunia Prison near Ramallah, and released on February 10. CPJ criticized the detentions and called on the Palestinian Authority to either charge or release the journalists.

In July, the Palestinian Authority instructed Al-Jazeera to cease operating in the West Bank for four days after the satellite channel aired controversial statements by Faruq al-Qadumi, a Fatah party leader, about Abbas. Al-Qadumi accused Abbas of being involved with former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in a plot to assassinate Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders in 2004. According to Al-Jazeera's Web site, the Palestinian Information Ministry described the allegations as untrue and accused Al-Jazeera of "devoting significant segments of its broadcasts to incitement against the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority." Al-Jazeera has about 30 correspondents, camera operators, fixers, and technicians operating in the West Bank.

Journalists working in the Palestinian territories also faced harassment from Israeli authorities. In October, Israeli security forces assaulted a journalist working for the European Pressphoto Agency (EPA) in east Hebron, according to the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms, or MADA. Correspondent and photographer Abdel-Hafiz Hashlamoun said Israeli soldiers beat him with a gun and kicked him while he was filming Israeli soldiers alleged to have destroyed irrigation pipes belonging to Palestinian farmers, MADA reported. In a separate case in October, EPA photographer Najeh Hashlamoun said Israeli Civilian Administration workers had struck him in the face with his own camera, MADA reported. In June, Israeli soldiers assaulted five photojournalists working for international media and prevented them from covering a gathering of Palestinian and Israeli activists protesting the confiscation of farmers' land, ac-

According to the Arab media advocacy group SKeyes. One journalist reported that a soldier pushed him down, causing him to hit his head and fall unconscious.

Also in October, according to MADA and other sources, Israeli security forces disguised themselves as journalists to infiltrate a group of Palestinian protesters in Jerusalem. Awad Awad, chairman of the Palestinian Photojournalists' Committee, said the security agents were dressed as photographers and carried cameras. The agents arrested a number of young protesters at the demonstration.

LIBYA

COL. MUAMMAR QADDAFI MARKED IN SEPTEMBER THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY of the coup that brought him to power and led to the eradication of human rights and the assassination and enforced disappearance of hundreds of critics, including journalists. The government has used softer tactics of repression in recent years in keeping with its efforts to rehabilitate Qaddafi's international image, but it has maintained a tight grip on the news media.

"They've realized that routinely harassing journalists ... achieves the same goal without causing any public outcry," said Omar al-Keddi, a Radio Netherlands journalist and a Libyan who was forced into exile 10 years ago. Al-Jazeera and human rights defenders cited a spate of defamation cases filed in early year by the office of the press prosecutor, an agency assigned specifically to investigate purported news media offenses. Although no journalist was in prison in late year, harassment appeared to be the government's strategy. CPJ sources said the prosecutor's office has made a practice of summoning journalists for questioning multiple times, often forcing them to travel many miles on short notice. In February, more than 60 academics and journalists joined in a petition denouncing the "judicial harassment," news reports said.

The regime continued to be aggressive in pursuing prosecutions of critical journalists based in other autocratic countries. In the spring, the Libyan Embassy in Rabat persuaded Moroccan prosecutors to file defamation charges against three newspapers in that country. The Moroccan papers had published critical stories about Qaddafi's rise to power, his *Green Book* political treatise, and the 2008 arrests of family members in an assault case.

In June, a Casablanca court ordered *Al-Massae*, *Al-Jarida al-Oula*, and *Al-Ahdath al-Maghrebia* each to pay fines of 100,000 dirhams (US\$12,500) and damages of 1 million dirhams (US\$125,200) for "injuring the dignity" of the Libyan leader. Moroccan courts are noted for a lack of independence and a susceptibility to political influence, CPJ research shows. Qaddafi's support of Morocco's claim of sovereignty over the disputed Western Sahara, Libyan investments in

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Regime pursues defamation cases in Morocco and other countries.
- » Qaddafi nationalizes the country's sole private television station.

KEY STATISTIC

3 Moroccan newspapers ordered to pay damages for "injuring the dignity" of Col. Muammar Qaddafi.

Morocco, and the presence of hundreds of thousands of Moroccan workers in Libya were among the factors that likely affected the court decision, CPJ sources said.

The verdict prompted outrage among press and human rights groups. "This was a freedom of opinion case," one defense lawyer, Hassan Semlali,

told CPJ. "There is no defamation at all. Qaddafi used all of his weight to muzzle three dailies at the same time." Libya has a history of pushing defamation cases in countries where it can get a sympathetic ear. The regime pursued legal actions against Egyptian journalists in 2004 and 2007, against an Algerian daily in 2006, and against a Moroccan editor in 2004.

Qaddafi's intolerance of any level of critical journalism was reflected by the regime's sudden decision in April to nationalize the Al-Ghad media group, which had launched Al-Libiya, the country's first private television station. Established in 2007 by Qaddafi's son, Sayf al-Islam, the Al-Ghad group also encompassed the newspapers *Oea* and *Cyrene* and two radio stations.

State-run media gave no reason for the decision, but independent news outlets said the satellite broadcaster Al-Libiya was about to air a report on the regime's use of torture and its persecution of dissidents. Egyptian authorities had also complained about critical on-air remarks made by commentator Hamdi Kandil, journalists told CPJ. Al-Libiya and the two radio stations were brought under the state-run Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation and the two dailies under the Public Press Foundation.

Creation of the Al-Ghad media outlets was initially seen as a public relations ploy intended to improve the regime's global image and promote Sayf al-Islam Qaddafi as a reformer. But the outlets hired professional and independent-minded journalists and tackled important (and otherwise ignored) social issues in critical ways. Libyan journalists said the Al-Ghad outlets appeared to have had support among reform-minded people in the regime, but were ultimately toppled by the reactionary elements that have long urged iron-fisted press policies. Al-Ghad journalists were among those summoned for interrogation by government prosecutors, according to the Libyan League for Human Rights, a group of exiled academics and writers.

OpenNet Initiative, an academic collaboration that studies online censorship, said the regime conducts selective filtering of online political content. In a report published in August 2009, OpenNet also noted that “a number of independent and pro-opposition Web sites were found to be sporadically hacked and defaced, and their content replaced with pro-Libyan leader content.” Blogs were few in number and tended to focus on culture and literature rather than politics, OpenNet said.

The Libyan League for Human Rights offered an important reminder of the regime’s brutally repressive history. On World Press Freedom Day, the organization released a list of reporters who had been murdered or who had disappeared over the past four decades. The list of “journalists who lost their lives for ethically doing their job” included Daif al-Ghazal al-Shuhaibi. His disfigured body was found in the suburbs of Benghazi on June 2, 2005, about two weeks after he was reported missing, according to several sources. A former state media employee, he had recently begun writing online articles describing official corruption. To date, no credible and transparent inquiry into al-Ghazal’s death has been conducted. In July 2007, news reports quoted al-Ghazal’s family as saying that a Tripoli court sentenced three unidentified men to death for the murder. But independent journalists noted that no official details were ever released about the supposed prosecution, and that al-Ghazal’s family might have been pressured by authorities to make their statement.

MOROCCO

AS KING MOHAMMED VI MARKED HIS FIRST DECADE ON THE ALAWITE throne, his government moved aggressively to censor coverage of the royal family and silence other critical news reporting, fueling deep concern about the future of independent journalism in this North African nation.

Reporting even positive news about the 46-year-old monarch, portrayed as liberal-minded in 1999 when he succeeded his father, King Hassan II, prompted retaliation. On August 1, authorities destroyed more than 100,000 copies of *Nichane*, an Arabic-language weekly, and *Tel Quel*, its French-language sister, both of which carried a public opinion poll in which 91 percent of respondents said they viewed the king favorably. Three days later, the government banned an issue of the French daily *Le Monde* that also carried the poll results. “Conducting a survey, the main focus of which is to ask the citizens to give their thoughts on the king’s actions is in itself a violation of the principles and the foundation of the royal system,” Minister of Communication Khalid Naciri told reporters. “In Morocco, the monarchy cannot be the object of a debate, even through a survey.”

Critical scrutiny of the royal family has been effectively criminalized. The notorious 2002 Press Law allows the government to ban local or foreign papers found to “harm Islam, the monarchy, territorial integrity, or public order.” Twenty-six separate articles call for prison penalties for journalistic activities considered offensive, but insulting the royal family is especially risky, with potential punishment of three to five years in prison. Under the constitution, the king is “sacred and inviolable.”

Authorities used those legal tools to obstruct and delay distribution of the July 15 issue of *Le Monde*, and to ban the July 9-15 issue of the French weekly *Le Courrier International*, news reports said. *Le Monde* carried an opinion piece by Aboubakr Jamaï, former editor of the critical Moroccan weekly *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, in which he characterized the king’s press policy as a “war against independent journalism.” The banned issue of *Le Courrier International* reprinted an article on the monarch’s personal wealth that initially ran in *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*. The piece was accompanied by an editorial cartoon calling Mohammed VI “the richest king of the poor!”

Questions about the king’s health were taboo. In October, a Rabat court sentenced Driss Chahtan, managing editor of the independent weekly *Al-Michael*, to a year in jail for “publishing false information” about the health of Mohammed VI during a period when the king had not been seen in public, local journalists told CPJ. The court also sentenced *Al-Michael* reporters Mostafa Hiran and Rashid Mahameed to three months in prison in connection with the September articles, but they were not immediately taken into custody. Defense attorneys told CPJ that the trial did not meet basic fairness standards, notably in the court’s refusal to allow the defense to summon witnesses. The same month, a Rabat court convicted Managing Editor Ali Anouzla and reporter Bochra Daou of the daily *Al-Jarida al-Oula* on similar “false information” charges in connection with stories on the king’s health. They were sentenced to suspended terms.

In September, police shut down the Casablanca daily *Akhbar al-Youm* after the Ministry of the Interior accused the newspaper of showing “blatant disrespect” in publishing an editorial cartoon concerning a “strictly private wedding ceremony organized by the royal family.” Prince Moulay Ismail, cousin of King Mohammed VI, was married in a ceremony that, though private, had generated considerable public interest. On October 30, a Casablanca court sentenced Taoufik Bouachrine, the paper’s publisher and editor, and cartoonist Khalid Gueddar to suspended jail sentences and monetary penalties for failing to show respect to the royal family. The court also upheld the closing of the newspaper.

Moroccan courts have often been used to settle scores with critical journalists, CPJ research shows. In its annual report released in June, the Moroccan Association for Human Rights said the courts were being used routinely to punish critical

journalists and that trials related to freedom of expression were typically “unfair and politically motivated.” One case typified the perverse execution of justice.

Al-Jarida al-Oula was assessed fines of more than 350,000 dirhams (US\$43,000) in early year in connection with two defamation complaints filed by an executive for a pro-government newspaper. Khalil Hachemi Idrissi, publishing director of the French-language *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, had objected to *Al-Jarida al-Oula's* coverage of a 2008 episode in which a royal in-law was accused of shooting a traffic officer. Idrissi's paper called *Al-Jarida al-Oula* unpatriotic and unethical for covering a case that was otherwise ignored in the press. When *Al-Jarida*

al-Oula retorted that it had “no lesson in ethics to learn” from Idrissi's paper, the executive took the matter to court, claiming he and the judiciary had been insulted. In addition to the monetary penalties, Anouzla and *Al-Jarida al-Oula* columnist Jamal Boudouma each received suspended prison sentences.

On July 10, more than 20 dailies and weeklies withheld editorials to protest court decisions imposing heavy defamation damages against local publications. In an accompanying statement, the Moroccan Federation of Newspaper Editors denounced what it called “blind judicial escalation” against critical newspapers.

The most outrageous of the verdicts was issued in June when a Casablanca court ordered *Al-Massae*, *Al-Jarida al-Oula*, and *Al-Abdath al-Maghreb* each to pay fines of 100,000 dirhams (US\$12,500) and damages of 1 million dirhams (US\$125,200) to Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. The court found the independent dailies had insulted Qaddafi in opinion pieces that were critical of the Libyan leader. Moroccan prosecutors filed the case after getting protests from the Libyan Embassy in Rabat, defense lawyers said.

Le Journal Hebdomadaire, a leading government critic, was dealt a potentially crippling blow in court. On September 30, the Supreme Court upheld a 2006 ruling that ordered the weekly to pay damages of 3 million dirhams (US\$354,000) in a defamation case filed by Claude Moniquet, head of the Brussels-based European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center. Moniquet said *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* had defamed him in an article questioning his group's independence.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Authorities censor, jail journalists to silence coverage of the royal family.
- » Politicized courts issue heavy defamation awards.

KEY STATISTIC

100,000 Copies of two weeklies destroyed by authorities because they carried a poll about the king.

The organization had issued a report on the disputed Western Sahara that the newspaper said closely reflected the official view of the Moroccan government.

In July, CPJ wrote to the king to express grave concerns about “the continued use of the courts to suppress freedom of expression.” CPJ also wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in October to urge her to “impress upon Moroccan authorities that a free press is a crucial component of any free society.” Clinton at the time was on her way to Marrakesh, where the Moroccan government was about to host the Forum for the Future, a regional conference on freedom and democracy.

SUDAN

SUDANESE JOURNALISTS WORKED AMID POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY and severe restrictions. Pervasive official censorship restricted journalists from closely reporting on the tumultuous events of 2009: The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, sporadic fighting continued in the devastated region of Darfur, and a spike in ethnic violence in South Sudan sparked fears of renewed warfare. Security agents prevented coverage of topics deemed to be sensitive, including Darfur, the ICC, human rights issues, official corruption, the expulsion of aid agencies, and state censorship itself. The legislature passed a stringent new press law, dashing hopes that the repressive 2004 press law would be replaced with legislation up to international standards. Though the government announced an end to prior censorship in September, editors were unconvinced this would lead to significant change. Many local journalists feared that official regulations and widespread self-censorship could stifle hopes for a free and fair campaign in the lead-up to historic national elections scheduled for 2010.

The planned elections, which have been postponed multiple times, are a central condition of Sudan's north-south peace process. In January 2005, Sudan ended a two-decade civil war between the north's Arab-Muslim elite and the south's impoverished non-Muslim population with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). As part of the agreement, the ruling Islamist National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement formed a government of national unity led by al-Bashir. Meanwhile, the conflict in Darfur, which is thought to have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths, continued to simmer despite the presence of a U.N.-backed regional peacekeeping force.

Both the CPA and the 2005 interim constitution affirm the rights of free expression and press freedom. Despite these guarantees, authorities in Khartoum have constructed an oppressive censorship regime through a variety of mech-

anisms. The National Press Council, a body with only nominal independence from the ruling party, administers mandatory professional exams for journalists and editors, according to a report in the *Columbia Journalism Review*. Though several dozen newspapers are published locally, they are subject to surveillance and sanction by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). Security agents frequently detain and harass journalists seen as critical of the ruling National Congress Party, including those seeking to cover Darfur and international justice issues. The government also monitors Internet communications, including e-mail between private citizens. Human Rights Watch concluded in early 2009 that “the scope of information available to people in Sudan is more and more restricted as discussions and debates about political developments or other matters of significant public interest are curtailed through harsh limitations.”

After the conclusion of the north-south peace agreement, journalists and opposition members called for new media legislation that would allow independent political coverage of national elections. Instead, a press law passed unanimously by the national legislature in June contained several restrictive measures and failed to do away with official censorship. An earlier draft was particularly draconian, granting the National Press Council authority to close newspapers, grant and revoke publication licenses, impose strict disciplinary measures against journalists, and confiscate printing equipment. While the final version included amendments responding to criticism from media advocates and opposition parties, it still fell far short of international standards. For example, while the final version prohibits the press council from shutting newspapers for more than three days without a court decision, it retains a licensing system for journalists and allows state interference in the press on the grounds of national security or public order. The new law also failed to overturn a 1999 National Security Forces Law granting security agents significant powers over the media, which in practice has allowed them to censor newspapers by suppressing their publication or forcing them to remove critical stories.

In September, al-Bashir ordered an end to prior censorship by the NISS. Previously, all local publications were subject to prior review by the security service, which regularly forced editors to withhold individual articles. Even southern newspapers were subject to control by Khartoum, under a requirement that they either be printed in the capital or outside the country, greatly increasing costs. Censorship was tightened after February 2008, when some local newspapers accused the Sudanese government of backing rebels in neighboring Chad, according to international media reports.

The order to end prior censorship came after local newspaper editors agreed to sign a broadly worded code of conduct. It also followed a decision by the Supreme Court upholding media censorship as constitutional in the interests of

national security and public morality, according to the Europe-based *Sudan Tribune*. Many local journalists were skeptical of al-Bashir’s decision to ease censorship, and they remained concerned that the government would impose harsh punishments on journalists seen as crossing “red lines,” the unwritten rules on what kind of journalism is acceptable. One editor told Reuters, “There is no way [security forces] are going to tolerate anything about security, about the International Criminal Court.”

Before al-Bashir’s order, several egregious cases of censorship were documented by CPJ. For example, editors at the weekly *Al-Maidan*, operated by the opposition Sudanese Communist Party, declined to publish an issue in February because of extensive government interference. Security officials had forced staff to leave out nearly 20 articles, including political commentary and an opinion piece criticizing the war in Darfur, according to sources at the newspaper.

Various legal provisions, such as harsh criminal defamation statutes and other

repressive articles of the penal code, allow authorities to curtail press freedom, while journalists rarely have access to fair legal recourse. In July, for example, authorities said female columnist Amal Habbani should pay a fine equivalent to US\$400,000 after she wrote an opinion piece criticizing official prosecution of Lubna

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government continues to impose vast censorship.
- » New press law falls short of international standards.

KEY STATISTIC

9 Men executed in editor’s murder. Observers call it a miscarriage of justice.

al-Hussein, according to the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information. Habbani contested the claim, and the case was pending in late year. Al-Hussein, who is also a journalist, was convicted in a Sudanese court of indecent attire for wearing pants in public, in a case that drew international attention.

In a vast country lacking in infrastructure, broadcast media were the only means for most of the population to receive news. But Khartoum owned all local television stations and controlled most local broadcasters, aside from radio backed by the United Nations and a handful of stations based in South Sudan, which fall under the regulatory authority of the semi-autonomous government of South Sudan. Southern Sudanese authorities also occasionally harass journalists and censor reporting. According to Human Rights Watch, draft bills are pending before the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly that could help protect freedom

of the press, including a Right to Information Bill, an Independent Broadcasting Authority Bill, a South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation Bill, and a Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Organizational Bill. These broadly seek to implement the Southern Sudan Interim Constitution, which contains freedom of expression guarantees.

While Sudanese journalists bear the brunt of the government's mistrust of the press, authorities also occasionally harass and restrict foreign journalists. Foreign journalists' ability to reside in Sudan or visit Darfur continued to be hampered by government surveillance and layers of bureaucratic restrictions. Authorities required multiple forms of documentation such as press cards and work accreditation, sometimes involving several government agencies, such as the Press Council and the ministries of Immigration, Information, and Labor. Journalists leaving Darfur were often searched and questioned by security agents.

In February, authorities expelled a Canadian-Egyptian journalist, Heba Aly, after she filed a series of reports on Darfur and made an inquiry about domestic arms production. A freelance reporter for several news organizations including Bloomberg, the U.N. humanitarian news organization IRIN, and *The Christian Science Monitor*, Aly had reported from Sudan since June 2008. While Sudan's security services accused Aly of immigration violations, Aly maintained in media interviews that she had been expelled because of her reporting. Aly told Reuters her press accreditation ran out in January and she had not been able to renew it, despite repeated applications to the National Press Council. In March, a resident Tunisian journalist working for the Arabic-language Web site of television news channel France 24 and the London-based pan-Arab newspaper *Al-Hayat* was detained for two days and expelled from the country. The journalist, Zuhair Latif, said Sudanese intelligence agents stormed his apartment in Khartoum and confiscated his camera, tapes, and cell phones, before arresting him. The France 24 Web site said Sudanese authorities had claimed that Latif had been expelled because he had "violated immigration procedures," without specifying the violations. Latif told the channel that before his expulsion he had visited Darfur, where he had taken pictures and interviewed victims about the conflict there.

The brutal 2006 murder of newspaper editor Mohammed Taha Mohammed Ahmed remained unresolved. Editor-in-chief of the private daily *Al-Wifaq*, Taha was kidnapped and beheaded in apparent retaliation for having published an article questioning the origins of the Prophet Muhammad. Nine men found guilty of involvement in the assassination were executed in April, but human rights groups and defense lawyers said the defendants had been arbitrarily arrested and their confessions extracted through torture. "This case raised from the start huge question marks and suspicions because Mohammed Taha Mohammed Ahmed had lots of problems with influential and symbolic figures of the ruling

regime," an independent Sudanese journalist told CPJ. Fearing reprisals, he spoke on the condition of anonymity. "Many people doubted that those men were really responsible for his abduction and assassination. Others clearly said they were simply tools in the hands of some of al-Bashir's top aides."

TUNISIA

PRESIDENT ZINE EL ABIDINE BEN ALI WAS RE-ELECTED TO A FIFTH TERM with 90 percent of the vote amid severe restrictions on independent reporting. Ben Ali's government went after the country's journalist union, bringing down its democratically elected board, while his police bullied and harassed critical reporters. Two journalists, one of them a leading critic of the president, were in jail in late year.

The election appeared predetermined. Ben Ali faced three obscure candidates, two of whom said they actually supported the incumbent. No independent observer was allowed to monitor the October 25 vote. Ben Ali received an astonishing 97 percent of print media coverage, according to a survey by five local human rights groups. Nevertheless, Ben Ali assailed a "tiny minority" of Tunisians for "waging a desperate campaign with a number of foreign journalists, so as to cast doubt upon the outcome of elections."

Florence Beaugé, a correspondent for the French daily *Le Monde*, tried to cover the polling but was put on a flight back to Paris on October 21. Government sources quoted by Agence France-Presse said she was denied entry because she had "always adopted an obvious malevolence toward Tunisia and systematically took hostile positions." Two days later, *Le Monde* was informed by Tunisian authorities that the daily and its sister publications were indefinitely banned in the country. The paper's Web site was accessible, but links to critical articles about Tunisia were disabled.

The independent news site *Kalima*, which is blocked domestically, was targeted throughout October. *Kalima* journalists were detained by police for several

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government engineers ouster of independent journalist union leaders.
- » Two journalists are jailed in retaliation for critical reporting.

KEY STATISTIC

97 Percentage of newspaper campaign coverage that was devoted to President Ben Ali.

hours after taking pictures of campaign scenes in the northern city of Tabarka without authorization from the state-run Tunisia External Communication Agency. (Established in the early 1990s to promote the regime's image abroad, the agency has gradually taken charge of media accreditation, photo authorization, and official advertising distribution.) Plainclothes police roughed up *Kalima* editor and founder Sihem Bensedrine and prevented her from taking part in a workshop concerning coverage of the campaign, she told CPJ. Agents also assaulted Moez el-Bey, a contributor to *Kalima* and the opposition weekly *al-Mawkif* in the southern city of Sfax, and confiscated his equipment.

In November, CPJ honored Naziha Réjiba, a fellow *Kalima* editor and founder, with a 2009 International Press Freedom Award. "I am neither a hero nor a victim, but a journalist who wishes to work under normal conditions," she told a crowd of hundreds who gathered in New York for the award ceremony. "The degree of repression in Tunisia is such that it transforms normal activities into something exceptional."

That repression includes censorship, assaults, and detentions. On October 10, authorities seized an issue of the weekly *Al-Tariq al-Jadeed*, owned by the opposition Al-Tajdeed Movement, for "violating the electoral code" after the paper published the platform of its candidate, Ahmed Ibrahim, the movement said in a statement.

Slim Boukhdhir, a journalist long persecuted for his criticism of Ben Ali, said he was kidnapped near his Tunis home just hours after he gave a post-election interview to the BBC. Four men forced him into a car, beat him, stripped him of his clothes, and took his wallet and cell phone. The assailants dumped him, covered in bruises, in a public park, Boukhdhir told CPJ. The attack was reminiscent of a 2008 episode in which Boukhdhir was briefly abducted—in that instance, shortly after he wrote about then-U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's criticism of Tunisian press policies. Boukhdhir had also been jailed for eight months beginning in 2007 after writing articles critical of Ben Ali.

Two writers were in jail when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1. Taoufik Ben Brik, a contributor to several European media outlets and one of Ben Ali's top critics, was arrested in late October and later sentenced to six months in prison on trumped-up charges of assault, property damage, defamation, and violating public morality, according to CPJ interviews and news reports. Ben Brik was not brought to the Tunis court when the verdict was issued, according to his wife, Azza Zarrad. His lawyers and family were prevented from visiting him for several days before the court hearing, she said.

Zuhair Makhoulouf, a political activist and contributor to *Assabil Online*, a Tunisian news Web site, was arrested on October 20 and charged with "harming and disturbing others through the public communication network." He was ar-

rested after taking pictures and writing an article about pollution in the industrial areas of Nabeul, south of Tunis. He was sentenced to three months in prison and ordered to pay 6,000 dinars (US\$4,700) in damages.

Tunisia has a well-developed telecommunications system and high Internet penetration, but the government conducts pervasive filtering of content, according to research published in August 2009 by OpenNet Initiative, an academic collaboration that studies online censorship. The government extensively censors Web sites devoted to human rights and the political opposition, along with sites critical of government policies, research by OpenNet and CPJ shows. Prominent video-sharing sites such as YouTube were also blocked, OpenNet noted, "apparently because Tunisian activists used them to disseminate content critical of the regime's human rights practices." The state-run Tunisian Internet Agency also blocked links to online reviews of *La Régente de Carthage*, a book by French journalists that was critical of Tunisia's first lady. This pervasive filtering of Internet content—along with extensive monitoring and blocking of e-mail traffic—propelled Tunisia onto CPJ's list of the 10 Worst Countries to Be a Blogger.

Mohamed Abbou, a formerly imprisoned blogger and human rights lawyer, was placed under constant police surveillance and subjected to a smear campaign in government-backed newspapers beginning in mid-year. Abbou had given interviews to European media and Al-Jazeera in which he described his 36 months in prison, denounced police torture, and criticized the government's use of the courts to settle scores, according to local human rights groups. Two other formerly imprisoned journalists, Abdallah Zouari and Hamadi Jebali, told CPJ that they, too, were under tight police surveillance. The journalists, colleagues at the now-defunct Islamist weekly *Al-Fajr*, had both served long prison terms on vague antistate charges.

The government helped engineer the ouster of the elected leaders of the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists, a professional organization that had been considered independent. The syndicate's leadership had drawn authorities' ire by issuing a report in May critical of press freedom conditions, and later refusing to endorse Ben Ali or any other candidate for president. With the backing of the Ministry of Communications, pro-government syndicate members circulated a petition of no-confidence in the leadership.

Neji Bghouri, then syndicate president, told CPJ that a number of journalists had been intimidated or threatened with loss of employment if they did not join the petition. "Privately owned media are pressuring their journalists to sign the petition for fear of being deprived of public support and advertising revenue," he told CPJ at the time. The Tunisia External Communication Agency selectively distributes official advertising to outlets aligned with the government, CPJ research shows.

In August, the syndicate's leaders were replaced at a meeting stacked with pro-government members. The first order of business for the reconstituted syndicate was sending a message of allegiance to Ben Ali for his "sustained keenness on further promoting the Tunisian media landscape." The new leadership ignored attacks on press freedom, among them an October police raid at the Tunis offices of Internet Radio 6 and the confiscation of the station's broadcasting equipment, journalists told CPJ.

Ownership of private broadcast media was dominated by Ben Ali's relatives and close friends, a situation the Tunisian Syndicate of Free Radio Stations condemned in October as a "policy of cronyism." Ben Ali's son-in-law, Sakhr Materi, established a religious radio broadcaster called Ezzeitouna in 2007 and was given approval to set up a television station under the same name, according to news reports. In April, Materi also took control of Dar Assabah, the oldest and one of the most important privately owned print media groups in the country. Most privately owned media outlets continuously praised Ben Ali's leadership and attacked his critics.

CPJ wrote twice to Ben Ali in 2009 to urge him to end attacks on journalists and to bring his government's practices in line with standards outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon noted that "acts of reprisal against critical journalism are routine, systematic, and continue unabated." He added: "The failure to protect freedom of expression is all the more disheartening because Tunisia was among the first countries in the region to sign and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and to do so without reservations."

YEMEN

CONTINUING A STEADY YEARS-LONG DECLINE, YEMEN BECAME ONE of the most repressive countries in the region for the press. Journalists covering clashes in the country's restive south faced severe restrictions. Government repression reached its peak in May, when at least eight newspapers that had covered violent protests were barred from distribution, several papers faced criminal charges, and one paper came under direct attack from state security agents. Government officials established a special court for perceived news media offenses.

The Sana'a-based government sought to tamp down longstanding tensions in the country's south, where demonstrators protested policies they saw as marginalizing the region's residents and denying them public services. In late April—around the anniversary of the 1990 unification of north and south—conditions boiled over as government troops clashed with armed protesters. Following its past practice, the government moved aggressively to control the flow of infor-

mation. An armed group believed to have acted on behalf of authorities burned more than 16,000 copies of the popular daily *Al-Ayyam* on May 1, Bashraheel Bashraheel, the paper's general manager, told CPJ. Two days later, military authorities prevented distribution of the paper, he said. By May 4, security forces had surrounded the paper's production plant and effectively barred it from publishing, Bashraheel said.

The Ministry of Information expanded its suppression of the news the same day, barring the sales of Sana'a-based *Al-Masdar*, *Al-Ahali*, *Al-Diyar*, *Al-Mustaqila*, *Al-Nida*, *Al-Share*, and Aden-based *Al-Wattani* and *Al-Ayyam*, according to press reports. All had covered unrest in the south in ways that were critical of the government. Information Minister Hassan Ahmed al-Luzi argued that the papers had violated the country's press law by publishing articles that threatened national unity and "spread hatred and enmity among the united people of Yemen," *Yemen Times* reported.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh sent a similar message when he addressed parliament on May 6. "If there is room to talk in the press then you have to publish kindness, love, and brotherhood. If there were mistakes in development or security or the judiciary, criticize those mistakes and there would be no objection, there is room for that. But the unity, freedom, democracy, revolution, the republic, and the constitution are national invariants that cannot be crossed," he was quoted as saying in the state-run newspaper *Al-Thawra*.

Al-Ayyam remained shut in late year. The other newspapers resumed publication but faced sporadic censorship and harassment, according to local press reports. Authorities also took court action against several of the same newspapers in May. The Ministry of Information filed criminal complaints against *Al-Masdar*, *Al-Wattani*, *Al-Diyar*, *Al-Nida*, *Al-Share*, and *Al-Ayyam* on charges of inciting hatred and harming the unity and the interests of the country. The cases were pending in late year. Under the press code, editors of the papers could face up to one year imprisonment.

Government hostility against the press reached its peak on May 13 when security forces carried out an armed raid on the offices of *Al-Ayyam* in Aden, the main city in southern Yemen, the paper's general manager, Bashraheel, told CPJ. Clashes between security agents and the newspaper's guards lasted for about an hour, during which one passer-by was killed and two guards were injured. Security forces said they were trying to arrest *Al-Ayyam* Editor-in-Chief Hisham Bashraheel, his son Hani Bashraheel, and another staffer in relation to a 2008 case in which newspaper guards killed one of several assailants who were trying to take control of the paper's offices. Mohammed Al-Baqwaly, *Al-Ayyam's* lawyer, questioned the judiciary's motivation in seeking the arrests given the government's long record of censorship and harassment of the paper.

Amid protests from journalists and human rights advocates, the country's High Judicial Council established a special court in May to try cases related to media and publishing offenses, according to local press reports. More than 150 cases, some dating to 2006, were immediately referred to the Press and Publications Court, according to local press reports. In late October, in one of its first rulings, the court sentenced Munir Mawari, a Washington-based Yemeni journalist and contributor to the independent weekly *Al-Masdar*, to two years in prison on charges of defaming the president, journalists told CPJ. The court also imposed a lifetime ban on practicing journalism in Yemen. The court handed a suspended one-year jail term to Samir Jubran, editor of *Al-Masdar*, on the same charge and banned him from writing or running his newspaper for one year. The case stemmed from a November 2008 opinion piece in which Mawari called Saleh's leadership style a "weapon of mass destruction."

Mawari, who was tried in absentia, told CPJ that he discussed the "devastating impact" of a president who "prefers to see journalists taken to court in-

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government censors newspapers, establishes new press court.
- » Two journalists jailed without charge; one missing after being abducted.

8

KEY STATISTIC

Newspapers banned for periods beginning in May due to their coverage of unrest in the south.

stead of those involved in corruption." He called the verdict a "message aimed at terrorizing journalists and preventing them from writing about the president." *Al-Masdar* said it would appeal the verdict. Yemeni journalists questioned the legitimacy of the press court, saying the constitution makes no allowance for the creation of exceptional courts. They also said the professional

bans handed down by the court were not grounded in Yemeni law.

Two journalists were in jail when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1. Security forces detained Fuad Rashid, editor-in-chief of the news Web site *Mukalla Press*, on May 4 in the southern city of Al-Mukalla, the news outlet reported. Authorities did not disclose the basis for the detention, although *Mukalla Press* had regularly covered unrest in the south.

Salah al-Saqldi, editor-in-chief of the *Gulf Aden* news Web site, was seized by security forces during a raid at his home in Khour Mikasr in Aden province on June 18, according to local news reports. Security forces confiscated his laptop and a camera. *Gulf Aden* had intensively covered the conflict in southern Yemen.

According to local news reports, al-Saqldi was being held in a security services prison in Sana'a, but his family had not been allowed to see him. Authorities did not disclose any charges, according to local news reports.

Another journalist critical of the government disappeared. Muhammad al-Maqaleh, editor of *Aleshteraki*, a Web site affiliated with the opposition Socialist Party, was kidnapped by unidentified men on September 18, according to news accounts. Witnesses quoted in local news reports said that armed, masked men intercepted al-Maqaleh's car in Sana'a, dragged him into their vehicle, and sped away. The week before, al-Maqaleh had posted an article condemning military airstrikes that killed 87 people and injured more than 100. The victims were internal refugees, having escaped ongoing fighting in Saada City. Al-Maqaleh's whereabouts were unknown in late year.

Facing civil unrest not only in the south, authorities were acutely sensitive to any coverage they saw as critical of government actions. In July, the government launched a military operation against fighters with the Al-Huthi, a Shiite tribal group, in Saada region, northwest Yemen. The government has been fighting the group since 2004. In November, Saudi Arabia launched cross-border ground and air attacks against Al-Huthi rebels. Hundreds of civilians were killed and injured in those attacks, according to news accounts.

Al-Jazeera, which devoted extensive coverage to social unrest, was singled out by government leaders for criticism. "The Al-Jazeera channel has become a source for criticizing Yemeni society," Masaad al-Lahibi, a member of parliament, was quoted in local press reports as saying in July. "It airs what is being provided to it by forces that are against Yemen and its blessed unity."

The station reported several cases of harassment and attacks. On June 22, for example, masked men stoned the station's Aden correspondent, Fadel Mubarak, causing head injuries, journalists told CPJ. The assailants also stole Mubarak's camera. A month later, an unknown caller contacted Al-Jazeera's Sana'a office and left a threatening message for Bureau Chief Murad Hashem. "Tell the bureau chief that his death is imminent," Hashem quoted the caller as saying.

Government repression also targeted critical news Web sites. The newspapers *Al-Masdar*, *Al-Tagheer*, and *Al-Share'* said in May that their Web sites had been briefly blocked domestically. Arafat Mudabish, editor-in-chief of *Al-Tagheer*, told CPJ that he believed the site was targeted because of its coverage of the southern unrest. *Mukalla Press*, based in the southern province of Hadhramaut, was inaccessible in Yemen throughout the year.

International reporters descended in late year to cover the government's response to the local branch of Al-Qaeda, which had sponsored a failed Christmas Day attack on a U.S.-bound airliner. Amid the country's considerable civil unrest, Al-Qaeda's activities had drawn little domestic coverage during the year.

SNAPSHOTS

ATTACKS & DEVELOPMENTS THROUGHOUT THE REGION

ALGERIA

- » Police confiscated a manuscript by journalist Mohamed Benchicou. *The Journal of a Free Man*, seized in February from a printing house in Blida, south of the capital, Algiers, recounted the life of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. In a statement posted on several news Web sites, Benchicou said security forces ordered the director of the printing house to cease work on the job. Authorities did not disclose the reason for the seizure. Benchicou, former publisher of the French-language daily *Le Matin*, had been released from prison in June 2006 after serving two years on trumped-up charges of violating currency laws.

JORDAN

- » In June, the government shut the Amman offices of two Iranian government-controlled television broadcasters, the Arabic-language Al-Alam and the English-language Press TV. The two stations had pursued editorial stances highly critical of the Jordanian government. Jordanian officials said the stations had failed to renew their government-required accreditation. Al-Alam disputed the assertion, saying that it had completed required paperwork six months before the expiration of its accreditation. Press TV did not comment.
- » Parliament voted in June to designate its press office as the sole source for parliamentary access, the government said in a statement. The office was charged with scheduling all interviews with members of parliament, and providing escorts to all journalists seeking to enter parliament. Members of parliament were apparently irked that news stories had not been carrying uniform information, according to the Samir Kassir Eyes Center, or SKeyes, a Beirut-based press freedom watchdog.

MAURITANIA

- » Police arrested Abbass Ould Braham, publisher of the independent news Web site *Taqadoumy*, in March after he wrote an article sharply critical of military rule, local journalists told CPJ. Domestic access to the site, hosted in the United States, was also blocked on orders of the public prosecutor. Three days after the arrest, police violently dispersed a demonstration by journal-

ists in the capital, Nouakchott, protesting Braham's arrest. Muhammad Ould Muhammad Abdul-Rahman, counselor to Mauritania's ruler, apologized to journalists for the use of violence, according to local news reports. Braham was freed without charge after five days in custody and access to his site was restored, according to local press reports.

SAUDI ARABIA

- » Authorities detained blogger Raafat al-Ghanim, a Syrian living in Saudi Arabia, on July 29 and brought him to an unknown location, according to online news reports and the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information. Later that day, police raided his home and confiscated his computer hard drive. Al-Ghanim, a regular contributor to multiple forums and online discussion boards, wrote about social and political issues in both Saudi Arabia and Syria. The Arabic Network said that al-Ghanim's last blog entry was deleted shortly after he was detained. The topic of the entry was not clear.

SYRIA

- » Intelligence agents and police shut the Damascus office of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression, a local advocacy group, on September 13, according to local and regional news reports. Authorities did not give a reason for the shutdown, the center said in a statement. The center, which also had an office in France, continued to document press freedom cases in late year.
- » On July 29, authorities shut the Damascus office of the Dubai-based Al-Mashriq satellite channel, according to local and regional press reports. Internal Security agents directed staff to report to a government security office in the capital, according to *Akhbar al-Sharq*, a London-based news Web site. Agents interrogated some employees and forced them to pledge no longer to work for the station, the Web site reported. News reports said the channel, owned by Ghassan Abud, a Syrian businessman, had been shut for filming a Damascus market without permission from authorities.

TURKEY

- » In February, the Interior Ministry reopened an investigation into the 2007 murder of editor Hrant Dink after a report by the Prime Minister's Service found negligence and potential culpability among high-ranking intelligence officials. The renewed investigation was expected to focus on possible

involvement by government officials in the slaying. Editor of the Turkish-Armenian language daily *Agos*, Dink was shot outside his newspaper's offices in Istanbul. Twenty suspects were arrested, and court proceedings were continuing in late 2009, according to news reports and human rights groups. Eight police officers were also being investigated over allegations they failed to act on warnings that Dink was in danger.

- » Assailants shot Cihan Hayırsevener, founder and editor of the daily *Güney Marmara'da Yaşam*, as he was walking to his office in Bandirma, north-east of Istanbul, on December 19, according to news reports. Hayırsevener died later that day at the Uludağ University Hospital in Bursa. Colleague Umit Babacan told CPJ that the editor had received recent death threats. Hayırsevener had reported on corruption allegations involving the owners of *İlkehaber*, another major daily in Bandirma. Police said they had identified three suspects in late year.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

- » The Federal Supreme Court upheld an Abu Dhabi newspaper's 2008 defamation conviction stemming from the paper's coverage of alleged steroid use in horse racing. Under the high court verdict, issued in July, the daily *Al-Emarat al-Youm* was suspended for 20 days and two executives were fined 20,000 dirhams (US\$5,400) each, according to local news reports.
- » The Federal National Council approved a new media bill in January that would replace the existing 1980 press law. The measure awaited the approval of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, president of the UAE, in late year. CPJ and other press freedom groups called on Khalifa to reject the measure, which would set harsh penalties for vaguely defined press violations, including criticism of the government, religion, and social mores. Penalties in the bill include six-month suspensions of publications, permanent revocations of publishing licenses, and fines as high as 5 million dirhams (US\$1.36 million).

Section break (opposite): AP/Aaron Favila—*The names of the Philippine journalists slain in Maguindanao province are posted outside the presidential palace in Manila during a November vigil.* Analysis (p. 247): AP/Bullit Marquez—*Across the Philippines, protesters called for justice in the Maguindanao massacre.*



JOURNALISTS KILLED

VICTIMS OF MAGUINDANAO MASSACRE

NOVEMBER 23, 2009, AMPATUAN, PHILIPPINES

JOURNALISTS

Henry Araneta, DZRH
Mark Gilbert Arriola, UNTV
Rubello Bataluna, *Gold Star Daily*
Arturo Betia, *Periodico Ini*
Romeo Jimmy Cabillo, *Midland Review*
Marites Cablitas, *News Focus* and *DXDX*
Hannibal Cachuela, *Punto News*
John Caniban, *Periodico Ini*
Lea Dalmacio, *Socsargen News*
Noel Decina, *Periodico Ini*
Gina Dela Cruz, *Saksi News*
Jhoy Duhay, *Gold Star Daily*
Jolito Evardo, UNTV
Santos Gatchalian, *DXGO*
Bienvenido Legarte Jr., *Prontiera News*
Lindo Lupogan, *Mindanao Daily Gazette*
Ernesto Maravilla, *Bombo Radyo*
Rey Merisco, *Periodico Ini*
Reynaldo Momay, *Midland Review*
Marife “Neneng” Montaña, *Saksi News* and *DXCI*
Rosell Morales, *News Focus*
Victor Nuñez, UNTV
Joel Parcon, *Prontiera News*
Ronnie Perante, *Gold Star Daily*
Fernando Razon, *Periodico Ini*
Alejandro Reblando, *Manila Bulletin*
Napoleon Salaysay, *Mindanao Gazette*
Ian Subang, *Socsargen Today*
Andres Teodoro, *Central Mindanao Inquirer*

MEDIA SUPPORT WORKERS

Benjie Adolfo, *Gold Star Daily*
Daniel Tiamson, UNTV

MAKINGS OF A MASSACRE: IMPUNITY FOSTERED PHILIPPINE KILLINGS

BY SHAWN W. CRISPIN

BEFORE HENRY ARANETA AND HIS COLLEAGUES SET OFF ON THE morning of November 23, 2009, on what would be their last assignment, the DZRH reporter sent his wife a text message: There could be trouble.

The assignment would seem routine to anyone unfamiliar with the violent political climate on the southern island of Mindanao. The journalists would accompany a convoy of people who intended to file candidacy papers for political clan leader Esmael Mangudadatu’s bid for governor of Maguindanao province. Having been warned of a possible ambush, Mangudadatu would not travel with the group but would instead send female family members and supporters, and invite the press to go along, in the belief that women and independent reporters would not be attacked. One reporter was troubled enough by rumors of an assault that he called a military commander to request security but was told that no protective escort would be deployed. Unnerved, he and two other journalists decided not to go.

En route to Shariff Aguak, the provincial capital, the journalists and Mangudadatu clan members were ambushed by more than 100 heavily armed militiamen and led at gunpoint to a remote clearing where large pits had been prepared. Twenty-nine journalists and two media support workers were shot and dumped



into two mass graves in an attack that took 57 lives altogether and gained notoriety around the world as the Maguindanao massacre. Authorities charged a number of suspects linked to a rival political clan, the ruling Ampatuans, including Andal Ampatuan Jr., mayor of Dato Unsay. Witnesses quoted in local news reports accused the mayor himself of shooting many of the victims. Ampatuan professed innocence and blamed the massacre on a Muslim rebel group known to be active in the area.

**THE NATION'S LEADERS
HAVE CONSISTENTLY
PLAYED DOWN THE GRAVITY
OF THE IMPUNITY PROBLEM.**

Details of the killings, the deadliest event for the press ever recorded by CPJ, emerged in an authoritative fact-finding report compiled by four local press organizations and a follow-up mission conducted by international groups, including CPJ. Solutions to end the entrenched culture of violence and impunity are more elusive.

While the scale of the attack was unprecedented, it was not entirely unpredictable in the often lawless context of Philippine politics. Before the massacre, CPJ had undertaken two missions to the country in 2009 to express its deep concerns and conduct research into the culture of impunity in media killings. In March, CPJ ranked the Philippines sixth on its annual Impunity Index, which measures unsolved journalist killings as a percentage of total population. Even before the massacre, the Philippines' impunity ranking was the highest in the world for a peacetime democracy, behind only war-ridden Iraq, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Colombia. It is sure to rise when CPJ compiles its new index in 2010. Sixty-five journalists have been murdered in the Philippines in the past two decades, a death toll trailing only Iraq. Philippine authorities have obtained convictions in just five murder cases during this time.

Yet the nation's leadership has consistently played down the gravity of the impunity problem. In March, presidential spokesman Cerge Remonde discounted CPJ's findings as an "exaggeration." His deflection was indicative of an official stance that has allowed wayward local government officials, so frequently involved in media killings in the Philippines, to perpetrate crimes without fear of punishment—even, apparently, the premeditated mass murder of 31 media workers.

Like the 42-year-old Araneta, the press victims in Maguindanao were all local journalists, according to the fact-finding report compiled by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists, and MindaNews. Most of the victims were reporters and photographers for Mindanao-based newspapers,

although some were employed by radio and television outlets.

"Nearly an entire generation" of local journalists was wiped out, said the report, which noted that most of the victims were married and had children. For those journalists who remain, fear is a constant. Local reporters who spoke with CPJ lamented that the security protocols they had implemented—traveling in large numbers to mitigate risks, requesting that authorities provide security for dangerous assignments—failed to save the lives of their friends and colleagues. Some of the slain journalists had undergone security training, but Mike Dobbie, a trainer for the International Federation of Journalists, said security protocols for local reporting would need to be "entirely revised" given the massacre and the strong possibility of more political violence in the run-up to May 2010 elections.

Many local journalists said they feared for their safety while reporting on the massacre's aftermath. Those fears were underscored by reports that unidentified men were photographing journalists as they reported on the arrests of Ampatuan clan members and the discovery of a massive underground armory said to belong to the group. Illustrating the depth of the journalists' concerns, several reports on the killings ran without bylines or datelines in both national and local newspapers.

Relatives of the slain journalists told CPJ that they, too, were fearful that the politically powerful suspects would evade justice, as has happened in so many previous media killings in Mindanao. In their fact-finding report, the local press groups found several troubling aspects to the official investigation, including the apparent mishandling of evidence. The report noted that recovery teams used a backhoe rather than shovels to extract victims' remains from the pits, a technique that likely compromised forensic evidence. "There was little or no consideration given to preserving evidence," the fact-finding team found, and "no consideration given to avoid contamination of the crime scene." Many days after the massacre, retrieval teams had failed to gather used mobile phone SIM cards and other evidence strewn about the crime scene.

**MANY FEAR THE SUSPECTS WILL
EVADE JUSTICE, AS HAS HAPPENED
IN SO MANY MEDIA KILLINGS.**

There were also signs that police themselves could have been involved in the killings. Witnesses said vehicles with police markings were seen during the ambush, and at least one Maguindanao police vehicle was unaccounted for in the aftermath. Just three days before the massacre, six new police checkpoints were established along the route the Mangudadatu convoy would take. The reason for the new checkpoints was unclear.

When CPJ traveled to Mindanao in December, a local prosecutor assigned to build the case against the accused described a lack of coordination between his panel and the police officials who had gathered evidence. He also expressed concern that his team members had insufficient resources to construct a case and inadequate security to ensure their own safety.

The mishandling of evidence, the intimidation of witnesses, the questions of official involvement, and the lack of sufficient investigative resources all fit a disturbingly familiar pattern in the Philippines, one that over the years has allowed the killers of journalists to wiggle free of justice. Given the Ampatuan clan's political power, including its ties to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, could even these horrific killings go unpunished?

In a meeting with international and local press groups, including CPJ, press secretary Remonde rejected any suggestion that the government be held directly accountable for the Maguindanao massacre. He emphasized that Arroyo had attended the wakes of victims and that the government would provide scholarships and compensation to slain journalists' family members. But without a clear commitment to protecting journalists and breaking the cycle of impunity, there was no guarantee that the Maguindanao massacre would be the Philippines' last.

PHILIPPINES, SOMALIA FUEL RECORD MEDIA DEATH TOLL

AT LEAST 70 JOURNALISTS WORLDWIDE WERE KILLED FOR THEIR work in 2009, the highest yearly tally ever documented by the Committee to Protect Journalists. The record toll was driven by the mass, election-related killings in Maguindanao province, Philippines, the deadliest event for the press in CPJ history, and the escalation of violence in Somalia. The worldwide tally surpassed the previous record of 67 deaths, set in 2007 when violence in Iraq was pervasive. CPJ is still investigating 24 other journalist deaths worldwide in 2009 to determine whether they were work-related.

CPJ found notable shifts in the risks in combat zones. Deaths in Iraq continued a significant downward trend: Four Iraqi journalists were killed during the year, the lowest annual tally since the war began in 2003. But violence soared in Somalia, where nine local journalists were killed. Throughout 2009, Al-Shabaab militants waged a terror campaign against the Somali press, murdering journalists and seizing news outlets. Among the victims was Said Tahlil Ahmed, managing director of the independent broadcaster HornAfrik, who was gunned down as he and other journalists walked through Mogadishu's Bakara Market to a press conference.

Four journalists were killed in Pakistan during the year, among them Musa Khankhel, a local television reporter known for his critical coverage. Abducted while covering a peace march in a militant-controlled area near the town of Matta, Khankhel was tortured and then shot repeatedly.

As in past years, murder was the leading cause of work-related deaths. At least 51 journalists were targeted and slain in retaliation for their work, representing about three-quarters of deaths in 2009. Twelve journalists were killed in crossfire while in combat situations; seven more died while covering dangerous assignments such as police raids or street protests. Many of the deadliest nations for the press in 2009 have long-term records of violence against journalists and high rates of impunity in those attacks.

Three journalists were murdered in Russia, which has had a high media fatality rate over two decades. The 2009 victims included Abdulmalik Akhmedilov, a Dagestani editor who sharply criticized government officials for suppressing religious and political dissent. He was found shot, execution-style, in his car.

Two journalists were killed in Afghanistan, where the conflict posed increasing danger. In December, a roadside bomb near Kandahar claimed the life of reporter Michelle Lang, who was embedded with Canadian troops.

Two murders were reported in both Mexico and Sri Lanka, where retaliatory violence was common. In Durango state, Mexico, assailants abducted crime

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reporter Eliseo Barrón Hernández from his home as his horrified family watched. His body, a gunshot wound to the head, was found later in a ditch. In Sri Lanka, eight helmeted motorcyclists intercepted Lasantha Wickramatunga's car on a road outside Colombo and beat him to death. The editor was known for his critical reporting on the government.

Here are other trends and details that emerged in CPJ's analysis:

- » The 2009 toll is up more than 65 percent from the 42 deaths recorded in 2008.
- » All but three of the 2009 victims were local journalists. While local reporters have long been more vulnerable to deadly violence than their foreign counterparts, the divide has never been wider in CPJ's annual assessment.
- » Print journalists constituted 57 percent of the toll, indicating that print media continue to play a front-line role in reporting the news in dangerous situations. Although CPJ research has found a notable decline in the number of print journalists in jail, it has charted no comparable drop in fatalities among print reporters, editors, and photographers.
- » In addition to the murders in Maguindanao, CPJ recorded three other work-related deaths in the Philippines in 2009. In all, 32 journalists and two support workers were killed in the country during the year.
- » Two journalists died of neglect or mistreatment while imprisoned on work-related charges. Novruzali Mamedov died in an Azerbaijani prison after being denied adequate medical care, while Iranian blogger Omidreza Mirsayafi died in Evin Prison under circumstances that were never fully explained.

CPJ compiles and analyzes journalist deaths each year. Researchers independently investigate and verify the circumstances behind each death. CPJ considers a case work-related only when its staff is reasonably certain that a journalist was killed in direct reprisal for his or her work, in crossfire, or while carrying out a dangerous assignment.

If the motive in a killing is unclear, but it is possible that a journalist died in relation to his or her work, CPJ classifies the case as "unconfirmed" and continues to investigate. CPJ's list does not include journalists who died in accidents—such as car or plane crashes—unless the crash was caused by hostile action. Journalists who disappear are not included in this report. Their cases are classified as "missing" and can be found at cpj.org.

70 JOURNALISTS KILLED: MOTIVE CONFIRMED

AFGHANISTAN: 2

Sultan Mohammed Munadi

The New York Times
September 9, 2009, near Kunduz

Munadi and *Times* colleague Stephen Farrell were kidnapped by the Taliban on September 5. Munadi was shot four days later during a British military rescue mission that freed Farrell, a British-Irish national. Farrell told the *Times* he did not know the source of fire that killed Munadi. The British decided to undertake the mission after Afghan government agents reported that the captors planned to move the journalists to Pakistan, the *Times* said.

The two were abducted while covering the aftermath of a NATO raid on two hijacked fuel tankers near Kunduz in which scores of civilians were reportedly killed. Munadi was a well-respected Afghan reporter who had just returned to the country for the presidential election held in August. He had been studying in Germany for a master's degree in public policy and had been a long-time reporter for the *Times* and other publications.

Munadi's remains were not recovered by the British rescue team. British military authorities released few details about the mission and did not respond to inquiries from CPJ seeking information about the circumstances of his death, whether his rescue was

an objective of the mission, or whether the troops had sufficient information to identify him as one of the captives.

In November, CPJ called on British Prime Minister Gordon Brown to undertake a thorough investigation into the rescue mission, noting that many questions were left unanswered in the aftermath.

Michelle Lang, *Calgary Herald*
and Canwest News Service
December 30, 2009, south of
Kandahar

Lang, embedded with Canadian troops in Afghanistan, was killed along with four soldiers while traveling in a military convoy. Their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb about two miles (three kilometers) south of the volatile city of Kandahar. Four other soldiers and a Canadian civilian were injured.

Lang was covering a provincial reconstruction team that was working with Afghan civilians to repair war damage, the *Calgary Herald* reported. Her death was the first of a Canadian journalist in Afghanistan.

AZERBAIJAN: 1

Novruzali Mamedov, *Talyshi Sado*
August 17, 2009, Baku

Mamedov, 68, editor of a now-defunct minority newspaper *Talyshi Sado*, died

in a Baku prison hospital while serving a 10-year jail term on fabricated charges of treason and incitement to ethnic hatred. The next day, a Penitentiary Service spokesman told the Azeri Press Agency (APA) that the journalist appeared to have suffered a stroke. Penitentiary Service representatives claimed that Mamedov had refused a transfer to a civilian hospital for treatment.

The official statement was directly at odds with accounts from the journalist's lawyer and supporters.

Ramiz Mamedov, the editor's lawyer, said the journalist told him two days before his death that medical treatment had been inadequate and his health was deteriorating. The lawyer (no relation to the journalist) also told CPJ that prison authorities refused to release the editor on humanitarian grounds despite calls from the Council of Europe's representative to Azerbaijan and the country's ombudsman. Novruzali Mamedov suffered from hypertension, bronchitis, neuritis, and a prostate tumor, the lawyer said.

Emin Huseynov, director of the Baku-based Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety, told CPJ that prison authorities did not comply with a local court's order to provide Mamedov with medical treatment beginning in March. He said authorities refused to allow independent medical treatment offered by a European Union delegation that visited the journalist in prison in June.

Azerbaijani authorities took Mamedov into state custody in February 2007,

initially on a trumped-up charge of resisting arrest, which was then changed to charges of state treason and incitement of ethnic hatred. A three-month-long, closed-door trial culminated in a 10-year jail sentence. Authorities never disclosed their evidence against the journalist. News reports said the case was based on an allegation that he had received money from Iran to publish *Talyshi Sado*, a tiny, twice-weekly publication that served Azerbaijan's ethnic Talysh minority. The Talysh community spans northern Iran and southern Azerbaijan. The paper folded after Mamedov's arrest.

COLOMBIA: 1

José Everardo Aguilar

Radio Súper and Bolívar Estéreo

April 24, 2009, Patía

A man posing as a delivery person entered Aguilar's home in southwestern Cauca province around 7:15 p.m., saying he had a package of photos to deliver, according to Ovidio Hoyos, director of the Popayán-based Radio Súper, where Aguilar worked. Once inside, the assailant shot Aguilar three times and fled. The journalist died at the scene, Hoyos told CPJ.

Aguilar, 72, was a correspondent for Radio Súper in the southern city of Patía. He also hosted a daily news program on the community radio station Bolívar Estéreo, Hoyos said. The journalist had reported for Radio

Súper for 10 years and was known for his harsh criticism of corruption and links between local politicians and right-wing paramilitaries, according to CPJ interviews and local news reports. A 30-year veteran, he had also reported for national Caracol Radio and RCN.

Local and national authorities were investigating, Col. Luis Joaquín Camacho, commander of the Cauca police, told CPJ. On July 10, the Colombian National Police arrested Arley Manquillo Rivera, also known as "El Huracán," at a routine checkpoint outside the provincial capital, Popayán, based on witness descriptions of the assailant, according to an official police statement. Authorities said Manquillo had been hired to kill the journalist, but a local court acquitted the defendant in November.

EL SALVADOR: 1

Christian Gregorio Poveda Ruiz

Freelance

September 2, 2009, Tonacatepeque

Salvadoran police found Poveda's body sprawled near his car on an isolated road in the town of Tonacatepeque, about 10 miles (15 kilometers) from the capital, San Salvador, according to local and international press reports. He had been shot in the face at least four times at close range. Authorities found an audio recorder and the journalist's press credentials at the scene.

Poveda, a 52-year-old Frenchman of Spanish descent, had documented violence in El Salvador as a filmmaker and photojournalist over the course of three decades.

Throughout 2008, the journalist worked on a highly anticipated documentary about one of the country's most violent street gangs, Mara 18. During the filming, Poveda lived with gang members for 18 months. The documentary, "La Vida Loca," was scheduled for wide release in September and had already been screened at international film festivals. It showed brutal killings, rites of initiation, and the judicial system's ineffectiveness in combating gangs. Local press reports said Poveda had received death threats from angry gang members.

Tonacatepeque was controlled by Mara 18, local press reports said. At the time of the murder, Poveda was reportedly traveling from nearby La Campanera, a town controlled by Mara 18's main rival, Mara Salvatrucha. Confrontations between the two gangs have been extremely violent. Witnesses said they called police to the scene of the killing after hearing several gunshots, according to local press reports.

In September, local police arrested five suspects: four alleged members of Mara 18 and a police agent assigned to the emergency phone system in a neighborhood outside San Salvador, according to news reports. Authorities said a sixth man, a Mara 18 member already jailed in connection with other killings, was the mastermind.

Salvadoran news reports said gang members may have killed Poveda because they believed him to be a police informant.

INDONESIA: 1

Anak Agung Prabangsa, *Radar Bali*
February 2009, Bali

Prabangsa, 41, a reporter with the Indonesian-language *Radar Bali* daily, was reported missing on February 12 on the provincial island of Bali. His body was found four days later, floating in waters west of the Padangbai harbor, news reports said. The journalist had received threatening calls and text messages on his cell phone for two weeks before he disappeared, the director of *Radar Bali*, Justin Herman, told CPJ.

Police arrested a local politician and several accomplices in the killing, which they said was motivated by the reporter's coverage of a local government project, news accounts said. Police alleged that I. Nyoman Susrama, a legislative council member for the district of Bangli, a large city in eastern Bali, and accomplices had seized Prabangsa from his home on February 11.

Police said the assailants took Prabangsa 30 miles (50 kilometers) to the small coastal town of Padangbai and dumped him into the sea, *The Jakarta Globe* reported. An autopsy report cited in news stories found saltwater in the journalist's digestive system, indicating that he may have been alive

when he entered the water. The autopsy said he also sustained head injuries and a broken wrist before his death.

Prabangsa's reporting had exposed possible corruption in a local education department project under Susrama's jurisdiction, according to the Alliance of Independent Journalists in Indonesia.

Police arrested Susrama and several others on May 24, according to *The Jakarta Globe*. The politician and three suspects, Komang Wardana, Komang Gede, and Nyoman Rencana, were accused of planning and executing the assassination. If convicted of premeditated murder, they face a possible death sentence, the *Globe* reported. Six others were accused of playing lesser roles in the killing, news reports said.

IRAN: 1

Omidreza Mirsayafi, *Rooznegar*
March 18, 2009, Tehran

Mirsayafi, 28, author of the cultural news blog, *Rooznegar*, died in Tehran's Evin Prison, where he was serving a 30-month term on charges of insulting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leader of the 1979 revolution.

Prison officials said Mirsayafi had committed suicide, the journalist's lawyer, Muhammad Ali Dadkhah, told the U.K.'s *Times Online*. Dadkhah

said Mirsayafi had expressed concerns about his health, "but the doctors there didn't take this seriously and said he was faking it." The journalist, convicted in November 2008, had begun serving his prison term in February 2009.

Hissam Fairoozy, an inmate, told Human Rights Activists in Iran (HRAI) that Mirsayafi had suffered from depression and had been taking antidepressant medications. Fairoozy, a physician, said that he was concerned about his fellow inmate's condition and had unsuccessfully sought to have prison doctors hospitalize him.

Mirsayafi's brother, Amirparviz, disputed claims that the journalist suffered from depression. He told the U.S. government-funded Voice of America (VOA) on March 28 that his brother had no history of taking antidepressant medications. He also said that his brother's body showed signs of abuse, including a left ear that "was covered with blood." VOA posted a photo of Mirsayafi's face, which showed facial bruises.

Mirsayafi, in an interview with HRAI after being sentenced, said he had been coerced into making a false confession. He said the court didn't specify the blog entries that it considered offensive. An unidentified Iranian blogger told the *Times Online* that the journalist's imprisonment may have been linked to an entry in which he questioned Iranian support for Hezbollah.

IRAQ: 4

Suhaib Adnan, Al-Baghdadia TV
Haidar Hashim Suhail
Al-Baghdadia TV
March 10, 2009, Abu Ghraib

Adnan, a cameraman, and Suhail, a correspondent, both working with the Cairo-based Al-Baghdadia satellite channel, were among more than 30 people killed when a suicide bomber set off an explosive in the town of Abu Ghraib, Anbar province, colleagues told CPJ. Suhail, 30, Adnan, 25, and a group of journalists were accompanying Brig. Gen. Mard Abdul Hassan, head of the tribal affairs division at the Ministry of Interior, to a tribal reconciliation gathering in Abu Ghraib. They were interviewing residents when the suicide bomber, wearing a military uniform, detonated the explosive, cameraman Raid Qassim told CPJ.

Four other journalists were injured in the attack. Ibrahim al-Katib, a correspondent with state-run Al-Iraqiya TV, suffered head injuries and internal bleeding and underwent surgery at Al-Yarmuk Hospital in Baghdad, his colleagues told CPJ. Qassim, assistant cameraman Uday Munzir, and driver Fawzi Aidan, all working with Al-Iraqiya, suffered minor injuries, Qassim told CPJ.

Alaa Abdel-Wahab
Al-Baghdadia TV
May 31, 2009, Mosul

Alaa Abdel-Wahab, a sports journalist with the Cairo-based Al-Baghdadia television station, died from injuries suffered when a bomb exploded in his car in Mosul, northern Iraq. The Associated Press reported.

The bomb also wounded Sultan Jerjis, a sports presenter with the local radio station Al-Rasheed, the Journalistic Freedoms Observatory, a local freedom watchdog, reported.

Abdel-Wahab and Jerjis, on assignment for a story about the local Olympic committee, had just finished eating lunch and were getting into Abdel-Wahab's car when the bomb exploded, according to AP. The bomb had been planted in Abdel-Wahab's car, but it was not clear why he had been targeted.

Abdel-Wahab, 37, was taken to the city's main hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Jerjis suffered minor leg wounds.

Orhan Hijran, Al-Rasheed
October 21, 2009, Kirkuk

Hijran, a cameraman with the Baghdad-based independent Al-Rasheed satellite television channel, was killed when a bomb exploded in front of his house in the Al-Khadhrah neighborhood of southwestern Kirkuk, Bureau Chief Jawdat Assaf told CPJ.

The bomb exploded in early afternoon as Hijran and Mohammed Abdullah Zadeh, a correspondent with Cairo-based Al-Baghdadia television, were returning home from an assign-

ment. Abdullah Zadeh suffered minor injuries.

Roadside bombs often struck the southwestern area of Kirkuk, which was frequently traveled by the U.S. military, local journalists told CPJ. Assaf said the area where Hijran was killed included a police checkpoint and had been the target of more than a dozen roadside bombs.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY: 1

Basil Ibrahim Faraj, Palestinian
Media and Communication Co.
January 7, 2009, Gaza

Faraj, a 22-year-old cameraman, was part of a four-member television crew that was traveling in Gaza on December 27, 2008, when its car was hit by an Israeli airstrike, according to regional news reports. The crew was not the target of the attack, but was hit by shrapnel and debris from the strike, the reports said.

Faraj's crew had just completed an interview near Al-Wa'd Association for Prisoners, a Hamas-affiliated charitable organization dedicated to supporting Palestinians in Israeli custody, when the association's building came under Israeli attack, Atif Issa, director general of the Palestinian Media and Communication Co., told CPJ. The crew, employed by the media company, was on assignment for Algerian TV.

All four crew members suffered injuries, but Faraj was the most critically wounded. He sustained a severe head injury and fell into a coma while in transit to Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. He was later transferred to a hospital in Egypt where he was pronounced dead on January 7, according to news reports.

KENYA: 1

Francis Nyaruri (Mong'are Mokuu)
Weekly Citizen
January 2009, Nyanza province

Nyaruri, a reporter for the private *Weekly Citizen* who wrote under the name Mong'are Mokuu, went missing on January 15, according to local journalists and relatives. His decapitated body was found two weeks later, on January 29, in the Kodera Forest in western Nyanza province. His hands were bound, and marks were found on his back.

His wife, Josephine Kwamboka, identified him at Kisii Hospital.

Nyaruri had left his residence in Nyamira at about 7:30 a.m. on January 15 to travel about 20 miles (30 kilometers) to Kisii to purchase construction materials, local journalists reported. Kwamboka told reporters that she spoke with her husband at around 11 a.m. that day, but did not hear from him again.

According to the *Weekly Citizen*, Nyaruri had written stories accusing

top police officers of fraud in a construction project. Local journalists told CPJ that officers had threatened him in response to the articles.

Two suspects were taken into police custody in May but were later released without explanation, according to a local journalist.

Three local journalists who interviewed Robert Natwoli, the chief investigative officer, said they were told Nyaruri was killed on orders of high-ranking officers in Nyanza province. Andrew Mandi, a lawyer for the Nyaruri family, told CPJ that he had spoken with the two suspects and had reached the same conclusion. Fearing reprisals from police, both Mandi and Natwoli went into hiding in June, local journalists told CPJ.

MADAGASCAR: 1

Ando Ratovonirina
Radio Télévision Analamanga
February 7, 2009, Antananarivo

Ratovonirina, a reporter and cameraman for the private broadcaster Radio Télévision Analamanga (RTA), was shot dead by presidential guards while covering an antigovernment demonstration in the capital, Antananarivo, according to witnesses.

When soldiers opened fire on opposition demonstrators marching toward the presidential palace, a bullet struck Ratovonirina in the head, according to local journalists. The journalist was

carrying a notebook and sound equipment, according to reporter Mirindra Raparivelo, who was filming the scene for RTA. Raparivelo recalled the hiss of bullets and the smell of gunfire as he crawled to safety uninjured.

At least 25 people were killed and another 167 injured in the shootings, according to The Associated Press. The country's defense minister resigned to protest the shootings, while the United Nations called for "a fair process by which those responsible will be brought to justice."

The shootings came amid a deepening power struggle between President Marc Ravalomanana and his rival, Andry Rajoelina, the outspoken 34-year-old mayor of Antananarivo. Rajoelina took control of the government later in the year.

Ratovonirina, 26, was the first journalist killed in the line of duty in Madagascar since CPJ began keeping detailed death records in 1992.

MEXICO: 2

Eliseo Barrón Hernández

La Opinión

May 25, 2009, Gómez Palacio

At around 8 p.m., at least eight hooded gunmen entered the house where Barrón, a reporter and photographer for the Torreón-based daily *La Opinión*, lived with his wife and two young daughters, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. The assailants beat the reporter and forced him out

of the house and into a white Nissan Tsuru that was parked outside, his wife told local reporters. He was not heard from again.

Authorities found Barrón's body the next day in the city of Gómez Palacio, Durango, according to *Milenio*, a national daily owned by the same company as *La Opinión*. The Durango state deputy attorney general, Noel Díaz, told reporters that the journalist's body was found in an irrigation ditch, according to The Associated Press. He had been tortured and shot at least 11 times, local news reports said.

Barrón, 35, had covered the police beat for 10 years for *La Opinión*, a paper based in neighboring Coahuila state, according to the national daily *El Universal*. In the days prior to his kidnapping, he had covered a corruption scandal in the Torreón police force that had resulted in the firing of more than 300 police officers, *Milenio* reported.

Federal authorities immediately took over the case, *Milenio* reported. On May 27, the day of Barrón's funeral, unidentified individuals hung five posters threatening journalists and soldiers in Torreón, the Mexican press reported. The messages, which were allegedly signed by the leader of the Sinaloa drug cartel, Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, said: "We are here, journalists, ask Eliseo Barrón. El Chapo and the cartel do not forgive, be careful, soldiers and journalists." One of the posters was hung outside a TV station, and an-

other outside a radio station, local press reports said.

On June 12, the Mexican army reportedly detained five suspects at a routine roadblock. In a statement, the federal Attorney General's office said that one suspect, Israel Sánchez Jaimes, confessed to kidnapping and shooting the journalist. Sánchez said Lucio Fernández, also known as "Lucifer," the Durango head of the criminal gang Los Zetas, had ordered Barrón's killing "in order to teach a lesson to other local journalists so that they wouldn't meddle in the work of the delinquent group," according to the Attorney General's office.

Bladimir Antuna García

El Tiempo de Durango

November 2, 2009, Durango

Two vehicles intercepted a car that Antuna, 39, a crime reporter for the daily *El Tiempo de Durango*, was driving to work in Durango, 560 miles (900 kilometers) northeast of Mexico City. Witnesses quoted in local press reports said that armed men got out of a Jeep Cherokee, dragged Antuna from his car into theirs, and then sped away.

Local authorities found Antuna's body that evening not far from where he was abducted. Next to the body was a note stating: "This happened to me for giving information to soldiers and for writing too much," according to the national daily *La Jornada*. Local investigators told reporters that the journalist appeared to have been

strangled.

Victor Garza, editor of *El Tiempo de Durango*, told CPJ that Antuna had broken a story on corruption in the Durango City police in the week before his death. The journalist had also investigated the April murder of fellow *El Tiempo de Durango* reporter Carlos Ortega Samper, although he had not yet published a story, colleagues said. Ortega reported on local corruption; CPJ was investigating whether his death was linked to his work.

Antuna's colleagues said he had received at least three death threats in recent months. The latest, they told CPJ, was a telephone threat from an unidentified individual who told the reporter that he would get no further warnings. In April, armed men approached the reporter's home at night but did not open fire, a colleague said.

In a November 5 statement, Durango State Prosecutor Daniel García Leal said Antuna never filed a complaint related to the threats against him, Mexican press reports said. García said local authorities did investigate the April incident.

The local press freedom group Center for Journalism and Public Ethics said Antuna had told the organization in June that he had been in contact with another Durango journalist who was murdered in May, Eliseo Barrón Hernández. The center said Antuna told them he and Barrón had been exchanging information about police corruption and organized crime in the state.

NEPAL: 1

Uma Singh

Janakpur Today, Radio Today
January 11, 2009, Dhanusa

As many as 15 people with knives attacked Uma Singh, a 27-year-old print and radio reporter, in her home in the southeastern district of Dhanusa, Janakpur zone, near the border with India, according to local and international news reports. Singh died of multiple stab wounds to the head and upper body while being transferred from a local hospital to a larger one later that evening.

Local journalists said police ignored Singh's profession as a possible motive and arrested five people, including her sister-in-law, for killing her over a property dispute.

Property did play a role, according to a report compiled by press freedom groups that conducted an investigative mission to Nepal in February. Singh believed Maoists abducted and murdered her father and brother in 2005 and seized family land. But in her reporting, the press freedom groups found, she had defended all victims displaced in the conflict, and addressed sensitive issues including communal violence and women's rights in print and on air.

"There is no denying that [Singh] may have had a personal stake in the issue of land seizures, but her journalism was exercised in the larger public interest," the report said. After consulting with police, family members, and colleagues, the groups con-

cluded that although there were several overlapping motives and actors involved, her work was a major factor in her death.

NIGERIA: 1

Bayo Ohu, *The Guardian*
September 20, 2009, Lagos

Ohu, 45, an assistant news editor for the influential private daily *The Guardian*, was shot by unidentified assailants as he answered a knock at the front door of his house in a northern suburb of Lagos. The six assailants took a laptop and cell phone, according to the journalist's relatives and local news reports.

Ohu was preparing to head to church to meet his wife, and two of his five children were home at the time, local journalists told CPJ. Neighbors drove him to a local hospital, but staff refused to treat him because he was not accompanied by police, journalists and news reports said. He died before neighbors could get him to another hospital, local journalists told CPJ.

Members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists told CPJ they believe Ohu was killed for his political reporting. They said the murder may be linked to his investigation into alleged fraud in the Customs Department. He had also been reporting on Ekiti state elections, a volatile campaign that had led to several reports of anti-press violence.

PAKISTAN: 4

Tahir Awan, freelance
Mohammad Imran, Express TV
January 4, 2009, Dera Ismail Khan

A suicide bomber killed Awan, a freelance reporter for the local *Eitedal* and *Apna Akhbar* newspapers, and Imran, a cameraman trainee for Express TV, in the town of Dera Ismail Khan, North West Frontier Province, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and local news reports.

The fatal explosion occurred in the wake of a smaller blast and was apparently designed to target the early responders to the scene, the reports said. At least five other people were killed and several more injured, including police and civilians, in the early evening attack, according to the news reports.

Musa Khankhel
Geo TV and *The News*
February 18, 2009, Matta

No one claimed responsibility for the killing of Khankhel, who died in the first violation of a truce called two days earlier between the government and local militant groups, according to local and international news reports. Khankhel was targeted while covering a peace march led by Muslim cleric Sufi Muhammad, father-in-law of local Taliban leader Maulana Fazlullah, the reports said. Muhammad was seeking to recruit his son-in-law to join a cease-fire agreement he had

negotiated with the government.

Geo Managing Director Azhar Abbas told CPJ that Khankhel had become separated from the rest of his four-person reporting team in a militant-controlled area near the town of Matta. He suffered multiple gunshot wounds to the torso and back of the head, Abbas said. A BBC report citing Khankhel's brother said the journalist had been abducted at gunpoint from the peace march, and that his hands and feet were bound when his body was discovered.

Khankhel was native to the region and had worked for Geo for five years, earning a reputation as an aggressive and courageous reporter, local journalists told CPJ. He also filed for the Geo-affiliated daily *The News*.

Janullah Hashimzada
Shamshad TV
August 24, 2009, Jamrud

Three unidentified gunmen fired at the Afghan journalist and his colleague, Ali Khan, while they were traveling on a public minibus near the town of Jamrud, Khyber Agency, northwestern Pakistan, according to local and international news reports.

A white car carrying the gunmen intercepted the bus with Hashimzada and Khan as it was en route to Peshawar from the Afghan border town of Torkham, according to The Associated Press. The gunmen targeted the journalists, killing Hashimzada and severely injuring Khan, according to

AP. No other injuries were reported.

Both journalists worked for Afghanistan's Shamshad TV. Hashimzada, the station's Peshawar-based bureau chief for Pakistan, also reported for AP, the Pajhwok Afghan News agency, and other news outlets, the reports said. No one claimed responsibility for the killing, according to news reports.

Hashimzada was known as a critic of the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, and his reports had challenged authorities and intelligence agencies in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, the reports said. "He received threats four weeks ago to leave Peshawar and not report Taliban and Al-Qaeda activity in Pakistan. It is clear ... he lost his life for reporting," Danish Karokhel, director of Pajhwok Afghan News agency, told CPJ.

PHILIPPINES: 32

Ernie Rollin, DXSY

February 23, 2009, Oroquieta City

Two men shot Rollin at 5:30 a.m. at a gas station in Oroquieta City in the Philippine province of Misamis Occidental, according to a statement issued by the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and local news reports.

The men, who were riding a motorcycle and wearing ski masks, shot him at least three times while he was parking at a gas station, the reports said. Rollin's partner, Ligaya Barero, who was waiting for him nearby, tried to help him when she heard the gunshots,

but the assailants shot him another time and fled, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* reported. Barero was placed in the government's witness protection program along with another witness, according to news reports.

Rollin had been a journalist for about 10 years and was popular for his outspoken comments on a prime-time current affairs program on the DXSY radio station. In the days preceding his death, Rollin had talked about controversial laws affecting the province. The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility told CPJ in Manila in July that Rollin's criticism of various politicians in his radio commentaries was most likely the cause of his death. The center confirmed that impression in follow-up interviews with family and work colleagues later in the year, they told CPJ. Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor, head of Task Force 211, a government agency created to prevent political violence, said in a July 30 statement that the group considered Rollin's murder to be work-related.

On May 24, police arrested suspected triggerman Juel Jumalon, a former member of the New People's Army, the reports said. A murder case was filed against Jumalon and another, unnamed man at the Misamis Occidental Regional Trial Court on June 22. The investigation did not reveal the mastermind behind the attack.

Jojo Trajano, Remate

June 3, 2009, Taytay Town

Reporter Trajano was killed in cross-fire during a police raid of an alleged organized crime den near Manila, according to local and international news reports.

Members of the group, which was suspected of drug trafficking and theft, opened fire on police during the 2:30 a.m. raid in Taytay Town, Rizal province, according to the reports. Trajano and a police officer were fatally wounded; a suspect was also killed when police returned fire. Trajano, who had accompanied police in his role as a crime reporter for the local newspaper *Remate*, was pronounced dead at a local hospital, according to the reports.

Police detained six people following the raid but said that at least two suspects, including the group's alleged leader, had evaded arrest, according to the *GMA News* Web site.

Crispin Perez, DWDO

June 9, 2009, San Jose

An unidentified attacker stabbed and fatally shot Perez in San Jose, province of Mindoro Occidental, according to local and international news reports.

The attack took place after Perez's morning show on local DWDO Radio, according to the reports. The perpetrator pretended to seek advice from the journalist, killed him during their conversation, and then fled on a motorcycle, according to the reports. Perez, a lawyer and former politician, was declared dead at a local hospital.

Perez's widow, who witnessed the attack, identified a local police official—who is also a bodyguard for a local politician—as the gunman, according to the local press freedom group Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility. Local journalists believe Perez was killed because his radio program had discussed irregularities in local mining and electricity projects.

Twenty-nine journalists

November 23, 2009, Ampatuan

In the deadliest event for the press ever recorded by CPJ, 29 journalists and two media support workers were ambushed and brutally slain as they traveled in Maguindanao province with a convoy of people who intended to file gubernatorial candidacy papers for a local politician. In all, 57 people were killed in the attack, which was apparently motivated by political clan rivalries.

A full account of the case and a list of the victims appear on pages 246-250.

RUSSIA: 3

Anastasiya Baburova

Novaya Gazeta

January 19, 2009, Moscow

An assailant wearing a ski mask shot Baburova, 25, a freelance correspondent for the independent newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, at around 3 p.m. on a downtown street within walking distance of the Kremlin. Baburova

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 had just left the Independent Press Center, where the news conference was held, and were chatting as they strolled outside.

The assailant shot Markelov in the back of the head with a pistol fitted with a silencer, the independent business daily *Kommersant* reported, citing sources in the Prosecutor General's office. Baburova apparently tried to stop the killer, who walked past her after shooting Markelov; the man then shot her in the head, *Kommersant* reported, citing unnamed witnesses. Markelov, 34, died immediately; Baburova died several hours later in a Moscow hospital, where she had undergone surgery, the independent news Web site *Lenta* reported.

Baburova was a journalism student at Moscow State University and had contributed to *Novaya Gazeta* since October 2008, covering the activities of neo-Nazi groups and race-motivated crimes, which had been on the rise in Moscow, Deputy Editor Sergei Sokolov told CPJ.

Russia's top investigative agency, the Investigative Committee of the federal Prosecutor General's office, took charge of the case. In November, the committee announced the arrests of two members of a neo-fascist group. One was identified as the gunman; the other, a lookout.

Natalya Estemirova
Novaya Gazeta and *Kavkazsky Uzel*
July 15, 2009, Grozny

Four men forced Estemirova, 50, into a white Lada sedan in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, as she was leaving her apartment for work, Reuters reported. Witnesses said the journalist shouted that she was being kidnapped as the car sped from the scene, according to press reports. Later the same day, her body was found in the neighboring region of Ingushetia, according to international news reports. She was shot in the head and the chest; no belongings were reported missing.

Estemirova was a frequent contributor to the independent Moscow newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* and the Caucasus news Web site *Kavkazsky Uzel*. She was also an advocate for the Moscow-based human rights group Memorial and a consultant for the New York-based international rights group Human Rights Watch. She was the fifth *Novaya Gazeta* journalist killed since 2000.

Estemirova's colleagues told CPJ that her relentless reporting on human rights violations committed by federal and regional authorities in Chechnya put her at odds with regional officials. Oleg Orlov, head of Memorial, told the Russian service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that he believed Chechen authorities were behind the murder of his colleague.

Estemirova was one of the very few people reporting regularly from

Chechnya on human rights abuses. She had covered extrajudicial killings, abductions, and punitive arsons for *Novaya Gazeta*. After a series of threats from Chechen authorities, she wrote under a pseudonym, *Novaya Gazeta* reporter Elena Milashina said. Shortly before the murder, she had contributed to a Human Rights Watch report on the punitive burning of houses by regional authorities.

President Dmitry Medvedev condemned the murder in remarks to journalists at the Russian-German Public Forum in Munich on July 16. "What's most important is to find the criminals responsible and to sentence them to the punishment they deserve. This is important," he said. "It is important to do this to honor the people who died while defending our legal system, defending regular people, and to educate an entire new generation of citizens."

Abdulmalik Akhmedilov
Hakikat and *Sogratl*
August 11, 2009, Makhachkala

At least one assailant shot Akhmedilov, 32, in his car on the outskirts of the regional capital, Makhachkala, at around 1 p.m. The editor died at the scene, the independent Caucasus news Web site *Kavkazsky Uzel* reported.

Akhmedilov, known as Malik, was deputy editor of the Makhachkala-based daily *Hakikat* (The Truth) and a chief editor of the political monthly *Sogratl*, named after his native village. Both are published in Avar, the lan-

guage of the largest ethnic group in the volatile, multiethnic southern republic of Dagestan.

Zulfiya Gadzhiyeva, a *Hakikat* colleague, told CPJ that the editor sharply criticized federal and local officials for suppressing religious and political dissent under the guise of an "anti-extremism" campaign. In *Sogratl*, Akhmedilov called on regional authorities to investigate the 2008 police killing of a *Sogratl* resident whom law enforcement agents said was a guerrilla fighter. The journalist was also known for his investigative reporting into the recent assassinations of Dagestani officials, the Russian service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty reported.

Gadzhiyeva, who visited the crime scene and met with Akhmedilov's wife and neighbors, said witnesses saw at least one killer in a parked Lada sedan with tinted windows and no license plates in the editor's neighborhood. When the journalist left in his car for an errand, the Lada followed and at least one gunman fired, she told CPJ.

Akhmedilov's neighbors said they had seen the same Lada parked in the neighborhood for at least two days prior to the killing. Gadzhiyeva told CPJ. Akhmedilov did not report receiving any threats, she said.

The Dagestan Investigative Committee, the region's top investigative office, opened a probe into the murder, the agency reported on its Web site. News reports said investigators initially focused on the journalist's private life rather than his journalism.

SOMALIA: 9

Hassan Mayow Hassan
Radio Shabelle
January 1, 2009, Afgoye

Hassan, 36, a Radio Shabelle correspondent since 2006 in the town of Afgoye, 20 miles (30 kilometers) south of the capital, Mogadishu, was shot dead when he entered the town at around 10 a.m., local journalists told CPJ. He was stopped by government soldiers who accused him of collaborating with Islamic insurgent groups before one of them shot him twice in the head, the journalists said eyewitnesses told them.

According to a Radio Shabelle editor, Abdi Nasir, Hassan was en route to a news conference when he was killed. He had produced many reports on the humanitarian situation in the region, including critical stories about the army's harassment of civilians in the area, the journalists said.

"If there is any evidence of wrongdoing by a government soldier or officer, we will investigate," then-Minister of Information Ahmed Abdisalam told CPJ. No arrests were reported. Hassan was survived by a wife and five children.

Said Tahlil Ahmed, HornAfrik
February 2, 2009, Mogadishu

Masked gunmen repeatedly shot Tahlil, director of the independent broadcaster HornAfrik, as he and several other senior journalists were walking through the Bakara Market

area of the capital, according to CPJ interviews and news accounts.

The journalists had been summoned to a meeting with members of Al-Shabaab, a militant Islamist group that was apparently displeased with coverage of the January 31 presidential election won by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a moderate Islamic leader. Al-Shabaab had rejected the election and considered the newly elected leader to be a puppet of the West.

The other journalists escaped without serious injury, but Tahlil died at the scene. In a telephone interview, an Al-Shabaab spokesman denied responsibility for the murder.

Tahlil became director of HornAfrik after the company's founder, Ali Shar-marke, was killed in an August 2007 roadside bomb attack in Mogadishu. The director was best known for his Friday news program in which he discussed the week's top issues. He was survived by a wife and eight children.

Abdirisak Mohamed Warsame
Radio Shabelle
May 22, 2009, Mogadishu

Warsame, 24, was shot in crossfire between Transitional Federal Government forces and hard-line Islamic insurgents in the capital as he was walking to Radio Shabelle for his morning broadcast, local journalists told CPJ.

According to local journalists, the fighting prevented anyone from attending to Warsame for more than half an hour. The reporter, described as a

"workaholic" by colleagues, was survived by his wife of six months.

Nur Muse Hussein, Radio IQK
May 26, 2009, Beledweyn

Hussein died from gunshot wounds suffered while covering fighting in April. A veteran correspondent for Radio IQK, he suffered two bullet wounds to his right leg while reporting on clashes between militia groups in the central town of Beledweyn on April 20, according to the National Union of Somali Journalists.

Local journalist Abdel Rahim Dinni told CPJ that Hussein died in his home. One of the most senior journalists working in the region, he had started his career in 1970 as a reporter for the Somali National News Agency, the news Web site *Mareeg* reported. He was survived by a wife and five children.

Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe
Radio Shabelle
June 8, 2009, Mogadishu

Hirabe, 48, was shot several times in the head by unidentified gunmen as he and a colleague, Ahmed Omar Hashi, were walking to work in the capital, local journalists told CPJ. Hashi, 41, was shot in the stomach and hand but survived.

A veteran Radio Shabelle reporter, Hirabe took up the role as station director after the former director, Said Tahlil Ahmed, was murdered in February. A popular journalist, Hirabe had led a charity drive to help displaced So-

mali children in 2006. He was survived by two wives and five children.

Mohamud Mohamed Yusuf
Radio IQK
July 4, 2009, Mogadishu

Yusuf, 22, was killed in crossfire shortly after presenting the morning news on Radio IQK in northern Mogadishu. Local journalists said the fighting was so intense that Yusuf, hit twice in the stomach, was unattended for roughly three hours. The journalist was eventually taken to Medina Hospital but died from blood loss.

Yusuf worked at Radio IQK, a private radio station also referred to as Holy Quran Radio, for three years as a reporter, a presenter, and, occasionally, a producer, the National Union of Somali Journalists reported. He was survived by a wife and three children.

Abdulkhafar Abdulkadir, freelance
Mohamed Amin, Radio Shabelle
Hassan Zubeyr, Al-Arabiya
December 3, 2009, Mogadishu

Three journalists were killed in a suicide bomb attack at a Benadir University graduation ceremony in the capital, Mogadishu. In all, the explosion claimed the lives of at least 23 people, including several top government officials, according to news reports. Zubeyr, a cameraman for Al-Arabiya television, and Amin, a Radio Shabelle reporter, were pronounced dead at the scene. Abdulkadir, a freelance photographer, died

at a local hospital later in the day.

Minister of Information Dahir Mohamud Gelle told reporters that the suicide bomber was a suspected Al-Shabaab insurgent who was targeting government ministers attending the ceremony at the Hotel Shamo. Gelle said Health Minister Qamar Aden, Education Minister Ahmed Abdullahi, and Higher Education Minister Ibrahim Hassan were killed. The minister of sports and tourism, Suleiman Olad Roble, died two days later from injuries suffered in the attack.

Amin, 24, had worked for Radio Shabelle for just six months. Both of his parents had recently been killed, making him the family's primary provider. Zubeyr, 29, was a technician at Radio Shabelle before he left in 2006 to work as a cameraman for Al-Arabiya, exiled journalist Babuul Nur told CPJ. Zubeyr was survived by a pregnant wife and four children. Abdulkadir, 28, had gained attention in September, when he was the sole photojournalist to cover a suicide attack against African Union peacekeepers.

SRI LANKA: 2

Lasantha Wickramatunga *The Sunday Leader*

January 8, 2009, near Colombo

Eight helmeted men on four motorcycles forced Wickramatunga's car to the side of a busy street outside Colombo and beat him with iron bars

and wooden poles. He died in a local hospital a few hours later.

Wickramatunga, editor-in-chief of the weekly *The Sunday Leader*, was a prominent senior Sri Lankan journalist known for his critical reporting on the government. According to his brother, Lal Wickramatunga, chairman of the paper's parent company, Leader Publications, the editor had received anonymous death threats for months.

Lasantha Wickramatunga's wife, Sonali Samarasinghe-Wickramatunga, told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation that the couple had been followed by two men on a motorcycle as they ran errands that morning. Samarasinghe-Wickramatunga left Sri Lanka shortly after her husband's death. The couple had married only two weeks before.

Wickramatunga foresaw his own murder. In an editorial written shortly before his death and published three days after the murder, he said: "Countless journalists have been harassed, threatened, and killed. It has been my honor to belong to all those categories and now especially the last."

Puniyamoorthy Sathiyamoorthy Freelance

February 12, 2009, Mullaitheevu

Sathiyamoorthy, a supporter of the secessionist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), wrote for many pro-Tamil publications and frequently contributed to official LTTE media. His live commentaries from conflict

zones were widely seen and heard on pro-Tamil television and radio broadcasts. According to independent Tamil news sources as well as the LTTE, he was killed in a Sri Lankan artillery barrage in Mullaitheevu district.

Colleagues outside of the conflict area, not all of them Tamils, said Sathiyamoorthy's reports and commentaries were measured, and that he strove to maintain journalistic standards and an accurate representation of the wartime situations in which he found himself. His work had global impact, reaching large numbers of Tamils living overseas.

Born in 1972, he eventually moved to Jaffna but traveled throughout the areas controlled by the LTTE during the conflict. He was married and was the father of a 6-year-old girl. Several Tamil media reports said Sathiyamoorthy did not die immediately. They cited relatives who said a lack of proper medical attention contributed to his death.

TURKEY: 1

Cihan Hayırsevener *Güney Marmara'da Yaşam* December 19, 2009, Bandirma

Hayırsevener, 53, founder and editor of the daily *Güney Marmara'da Yaşam*, was shot three times in the leg while walking to his office in the town of Bandirma, northeast of Istanbul, at about 3 p.m., according to news reports and CPJ interviews. He died later that day at the Uludağ University Hospital

in Bursa.

Umit Babacan, an editor at *Güney Marmara'da Yaşam*, told CPJ that Hayırsevener had received recent, anonymous death threats in connection with his journalism. Hayırsevener had reported on corruption charges involving the owners of *İlkhaber*, another major daily in Bandirma, the *Hurriyet Daily News* reported. Three principals in *İlkhaber* had been imprisoned on charges of accepting cash payouts from a former mayor, the paper said. In late December, police said they had identified three suspects, news reports said.

VENEZUELA: 1

Orel Sambrano, *ABC de la Semana* and Radio América January 16, 2009, Valencia

A motorcycle-riding assailant shot Sambrano, director of the local political weekly *ABC de la Semana* and Radio América, at around 3 p.m. outside a video store in Valencia, 95 miles (150 kilometers) west of Caracas, according to local news reports and CPJ interviews. Sambrano, who was on his way home from Radio América, died from a gunshot wound to the back of his head, news reports said.

Sambrano, 62, a practicing lawyer, had worked as a political columnist for the local daily *Notitarde* in the north central province of Carabobo for 18 years and was known locally for his investigations and commen-

taries on local politics, Alejandrina Uribe, *Notitarde's* editor, told CPJ. Sambrano left *Notitarde* a year earlier but had announced his return as a columnist the morning he was killed, Uribe said. Prior to his death, he had reported extensively on local drug trafficking for *ABC de la Semana* and Radio América, according to news reports and CPJ interviews.

On February 13, Venezuelan authorities arrested Rafael Segundo Pérez, a former sergeant for the Carabobo po-

lice, in connection with Sambrano's killing. Pérez was accused of being a hired assassin, police told the local press. Robinson Castillo, the local police commissioner, told reporters that authorities were investigating whether a local businessman plotted the murder, the daily *El Nacional* reported. Authorities issued an arrest warrant for the businessman, but he was believed to have left Venezuela. Colleagues told CPJ that Sambrano had published a number of investigative pieces concerning the businessman.

24 JOURNALISTS KILLED: MOTIVE UNCONFIRMED

AFGHANISTAN: 1

Jawed Ahmad, freelance
March 11, 2009, Kandahar

Ahmad, 23, was shot while driving on a main street in Kandahar, not far from the governor's palace, according to The Canadian Press and Agence France-Presse. Another car, which the Canadian network CTV identified as a white Toyota, pulled alongside the passenger side and a gunman opened fire. Ahmad died at the scene, CTV said, citing the physician who pronounced him dead. The journalist was known by his nickname, Jojo, and also used the surname Yazemi or Yazamy.

Ahmad was a freelance field producer for CTV and worked for a number of other news organizations. He also pursued business projects unrelated

to journalism.

Paul Workman, a former CTV Afghanistan correspondent, wrote glowingly about Ahmad in a station blog post: "Jojo was good. He had no training in journalism, but pursued stories with enviable passion and courage, driven by an urge to get ahead fast. He wanted to take better pictures than anybody else, he wanted to get better interviews; he simply wanted to please. And he wasn't afraid, or at least he never showed it."

Beginning in October 2007, U.S. military forces detained Ahmad and held him without charge for 11 months. The U.S. Department of Defense said he was being held as an "unlawful enemy combatant" but gave no further explanation. The journalist was freed from Bagram Air Base in September 2008. He was never charged with a crime.

No claims of responsibility came from any political or militant groups in the days after his death.

BRAZIL: 1

José Givonaldo Vieira
Bezerros FM and *Folha do Agreste*
December 14, 2009, Bezerros

Three men in a light-colored compact car intercepted Vieira's vehicle outside the offices of Bezerros FM, a station owned by the journalist, in the city of Bezerros, about 70 miles (110 kilometers) from Recife, according to the national daily *O Globo*. Witnesses told reporters that one assailant walked up to Vieira's car and shot him three times in the chest and head. Vieira was taken to a local clinic and then transferred to a regional hospital in the nearby city of Cuaraçu, where he was pronounced dead.

Vieira, 40, hosted the radio program "Bezerros Comunidade," which focused on local social issues, *O Globo* reported. He also owned the local newspaper *Folha do Agreste* and a music production company.

Local police were investigating the killing, and authorities offered a reward of 2,000 reais (US\$1,200), according to news reports. Investigators told local reporters that Vieira's murder appeared to be a contract killing. They did not immediately identify a motive.

COLOMBIA: 2

Diego de Jesús Rojas Velásquez
Supía TV
September 22, 2009, near Supía

Rojas, a reporter and cameraman for the Supía-based community station Supía TV in central Caldas province, left the station's studio around 6 p.m. after receiving a purported tip about an unspecified story, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Shortly after, authorities found his body with four gunshot wounds on a highway connecting Caldas to the neighboring Antioquia province, local and international news reports said.

Witnesses told reporters that they heard Rojas arguing with several unidentified individuals prior to the gunshots. Investigators found his motorcycle with the keys in the ignition near the scene of the crime, the regional daily *La Patria* reported.

Rojas, 52, worked as a journalist in Supía for more than 30 years, colleagues said. Juan Carlos Taborda, Supía TV's director, told *La Patria* that he covered sports and social news, but did not report on sensitive issues. Local police and family members said he had not received any threats, the Spanish news service EFE reported. The journalist had also worked for the regional TV station Cable Unión and contributed occasionally to local dailies.

Supía Mayor Germán Ovidio Tobón said investigators believed the killing was linked to Rojas' personal life, the national daily *El Tiempo* reported. Colombian authorities offered a 15 million peso (US\$7,100) reward.

Hárold Humberto Rivas Quevedo
CNC Bugavisión
and Voces de Occidente
December 15, 2009, Buga

Rivas, 49, host of the political commentary show “Comuna Libre” on local television station CNC Bugavisión and a sports commentator on local radio station Voces de Occidente, left the TV studio in the western city of Buga shortly after 10 p.m., Station Manager Javier Gil told CPJ.

Arriving minutes later at a local funeral home that he managed, Rivas was approached by an individual wearing a dark motorcycle helmet, according to local news reports. The unidentified assailant fired five shots before fleeing aboard a motorcycle with a second individual. Rivas was pronounced dead at the scene, Gil told CPJ.

The station manager said Rivas was generally critical of civic problems but did not directly criticize particular officials or touch on sensitive issues. Gil said investigators did not immediately publicize any leads.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF CONGO: 1

Bruno Koko Chirambiza, Radio Star
August 23, 2009, Bukavu

Eight assailants in civilian clothing attacked Chirambiza, 24, and a friend while they were walking home from a wedding celebration, according to

the local press freedom group Journaliste en Danger (JED). Stabbed in the chest, the journalist died around 1:30 a.m. after being taken to a local hospital. A presenter of the Swahili newscast and a host of cultural programs covering music and youth issues, he had not reported any threats, according to Radio Star News Director Jimmy Bianga.

Speaking to Radio France Internationale (RFI) from the capital, Kinshasa, Congolese Communications Minister Lambert Mende declared that Chirambiza’s murder was a result of “banditry taking place in this city since the war began.” The assailants, however, did not steal any of the journalist’s personal belongings, which included a mobile phone and 5,600 Congolese francs (US\$7), according to Bianga.

Local journalists and JED noted that Chirambiza was buried within hours of his death, without an autopsy. No murder weapon was found. One person suspected of involvement in the attack was lynched by a local mob a few days after the murder, but no arrests were made, according to local journalists.

GUATEMALA: 2

Rolando Santiz, Telecentro 13
April 1, 2009, Guatemala City

Reporter Santiz and cameraman Antonio de León were driving to Telecentro 13 offices in Guatemala City just after 5 p.m. when two gunmen on a motorcycle fired several times

at their car, according to local news reports and CPJ interviews. Santiz, 52, was pronounced dead at the scene, while de León was hospitalized with head, jaw, and chest wounds.

Santiz, a 30-year veteran, was well-known in Guatemala, local journalists told CPJ. He had covered the police beat for about half of his career. Elsie Sierra, a spokeswoman for the TV station, said the journalist had received threats, although she said it was not clear whether they were linked to a specific story.

Marco Antonio Estrada
Tele Diario
June 6, 2009, Chiquimula

An unidentified assailant fired four shots at Estrada, a local correspondent for the national television station Tele Diario, as he was getting off his motorcycle on a street in Chiquimula, 140 miles (225 kilometers) east of Guatemala City, according to local news reports and CPJ interviews.

Witnesses quoted in the local press said the gunman fled in a car that was parked at the scene. Amílcar Rodas Ruano, a reporter for Tele Diario, told CPJ that Estrada’s cell phone had been taken in the 8 p.m. attack.

Estrada, 39, covered general assignments, which included stories on organized crime and drug trafficking. He had worked for more than 20 years as a journalist, local reporters told CPJ, covering Chiquimula for about half that time. His wife told local reporters that she did not know of any threats against him.

HONDURAS: 2

Rafael Munguía Ortiz
Radio Cadena Voces
March 31, 2009, San Pedro Sula

Unidentified gunmen in a green car shot Munguía, a local correspondent for Radio Cadena Voces, on a street in the Medina neighborhood of San Pedro Sula, 110 miles (175 kilometers) northwest of the capital, Tegucigalpa, according to local news reports and CPJ interviews. Eric Peñalva, a police spokesman, told CPJ that the journalist was shot seven times from a 9mm weapon at around 6 p.m.

Munguía, 52, had a long history as a journalist in San Pedro Sula, and had been with Radio Cadena Voces for more than two years, his colleague, Melissa Amaya, told CPJ. He had recently reported on violence and organized crime, she said.

Gabriel Fino Noriega
Estelar Radio, Radio América,
and TV Channel 9
July 3, 2009, San Juan Pueblo

Unidentified assailants gunned down broadcast reporter Noriega in San Juan Pueblo, 215 miles (350 kilometers) north of the capital, Tegucigalpa, as he was leaving the offices of Estelar Radio at around 5 p.m., police spokesman César Wilfredo Ardón told CPJ.

Noriega was shot multiple times, Ardón said, and died en route to a local hospital.

The journalist reported on general news, according to local press reports. Police had no immediate suspects but were considering journalism as a possible motive, Ardón said.

KAZAKHSTAN: 1

Gennady Pavlyuk (Ibragim Rustambek), *Bely Parokhod*
December 22, 2009, Almaty

Kyrgyz journalist Gennady Pavlyuk, who used the pen name Ibragim Rustambek, died in a hospital in Almaty, Kazakhstan, after falling from an upper-story window of an apartment building in the city six days earlier.

Pavlyuk, 40, described by colleagues as one of Kyrgyzstan's most prominent journalists, had traveled to Almaty on business, the purpose of which was not immediately clear. Some local news reports said Pavlyuk intended to start a pro-opposition online publication and had traveled to Almaty to meet with potential partners. Other reports said Pavlyuk was on a reporting trip to investigate a car-theft ring.

Pavlyuk, an ethnic Russian, had headed the Kyrgyz bureaus of the Russian newspapers *Argumenty i Fakty* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* before becoming editor-in-chief of the independent Kyrgyz newspaper *Bely Parokhod*. The publication was known for its examination of high-level corruption and its critical coverage of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, said

Marat Tokoyev, head of the Kyrgyz press freedom group, Public Association Journalists. In recent months, however, Pavlyuk had focused his efforts on the launch of his new publication, CPJ sources said.

Pavlyuk was found unconscious on the evening of December 16, sprawled on the overhang of an Almaty apartment building entrance, his hands and legs bound with tape, the Kazakhstan Interior Ministry said. It was not immediately clear why Pavlyuk had gone to the building or whom he had met there. A police search of a sixth-floor apartment found a roll of tape, Pavlyuk's jacket, a key for an Almaty hotel room that he had checked into earlier that day, and an empty laptop bag, the ministry said.

A security camera at the Almaty hotel captured images of Pavlyuk leaving with an unidentified man earlier that day, the Kyrgyz news agency AKIpress said. The windows in the apartment from which Pavlyuk apparently fell were not broken, AKIpress said. Pavlyuk suffered multiple injuries caused by the fall, according to doctors with Almaty's central city hospital. He died at around 6 a.m. on December 22, never having regained consciousness, the independent Kazakh newspaper *Respublika* reported.

MEXICO: 6

Jean Paul Ibarra Ramírez, *El Correo*
February 13, 2009, Iguala

Ibarra, a photographer for the newspaper *El Correo*, and Yenny Yuliana Marchán Arroyo, a reporter for the daily *Diario 21*, were on their way to cover a car accident at around 10 p.m. when an SUV pulled alongside their motorcycle and an unidentified gunman fired at them repeatedly, according to international news reports.

The gunman then got out of the vehicle and shot the photographer a final time in the head, police told CPJ. Ibarra, 33, died at the scene, press reports said. Marchán, 22, suffered serious injuries.

Police in the southern city of Iguala, Guerrero state, told CPJ that the assailant used a .45-caliber pistol, a firearm authorized exclusively for the Mexican army. Its use made the shooting a federal crime. Police said they had no leads.

Ibarra was a crime photographer, but, like many Mexican journalists, sought to steer clear of images that might anger criminal gangs or corrupt police, local reporters said. Marchán wrote a public opinion feature and covered the crime beat once a week for *Diario 21*.

Carlos Ortega Samper

El Tiempo de Durango

May 3, 2009, Santa María El Oro

Two pickup trucks intercepted Carlos Ortega Samper, a reporter for the Durango City-based daily *El Tiempo de Durango*, as he was driving home in the town of Santa María El Oro, 200 miles (320 kilometers) north of the state capital, colleagues told CPJ.

Four unidentified individuals got

off the trucks and pulled the reporter from his car, journalists at *El Tiempo de Durango* said. As he resisted, the assailants shot him three times in the head with a .40-caliber pistol, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Ortega, 52, died at the scene.

In an April 2 article, the journalist had alleged that Mayor Martín Silvestre Herrera and Juan Manuel Calderón Guzmán, the local representative for federal programs, had threatened him in connection with his recent reporting on the conditions of a local slaughterhouse. In the same story, Ortega wrote that he was investigating a local police officer, Salvador Flores Triana, for alleged corruption. The journalist said that the three men should be held responsible if anything were to happen to him or his family.

Ortega, also an attorney, had worked as the Santa María El Oro correspondent for *El Tiempo de Durango* for less than a year. His editor, Saúl García, told CPJ that he believed Ortega was killed in retaliation for his reporting on local government corruption. Authorities did not disclose a possible motive.

Silvestre told local reporters that he had no involvement in the murder. While acknowledging having had disagreements with Ortega, the mayor said he had never threatened him. CPJ calls to the other two officials went unanswered.

Juan Daniel Martínez Gil

Radiorama Acapulco and W Radio
July 28, 2009, La Máquina

The body of Martínez, anchor of the radio news programs “W Acapulco” on national W Radio and “Guerrero en Vivo” on local Radiorama Acapulco, was found partially buried in a vacant lot in the town of La Máquina in the state of Guerrero, Mexican news reports said. The journalist had been badly beaten, his hands and feet were tied, and his head was wrapped in brown tape, authorities told the local press. Forensic experts said that Martínez was asphyxiated, the news-weekly *Proceso* reported.

Enrique Silva, Radiorama Acapulco’s news director, told CPJ that Martínez was cautious when reporting the news and didn’t investigate sensitive topics such as drug trafficking or police activities. He said that the journalist had not informed him of any threats.

Colleagues who spoke to CPJ said they believed the killing was related to Martínez’s work although they were unable to pinpoint a specific story. The state prosecutor told local reporters that his office would review tapes of the journalist’s recent broadcasts to try to determine a possible motive for his murder.

Norberto Miranda Madrid

Radio Visión

September 23, 2009

Nuevo Casas Grandes

Two unidentified men wearing ski masks burst into the offices of local Radio Visión, where Miranda and his brother, José, were working, reporters told CPJ. The assailants shot Miranda

repeatedly in the back of the head in the 11 p.m. attack, a spokesman for the Chihuahua state prosecutor’s office, Julio César Castañeda, told CPJ. News reports said he died at the scene, but his brother was unharmed.

Miranda, 44, known as “El Gallito” (The Tough Guy), wrote a blog called *Cotorreando con el Gallito* and was a host on Radio Visión. A reporter with 15 years of experience, he was known for his harsh criticism of local crime, according to the national daily *El Universal*. In his most recent columns, he criticized the lack of safety in Nuevo Casas Grandes and its surrounding areas.

The journalist’s last blog entry detailed what he said was a string of 25 execution-style murders in the area. He pointed to organized crime groups as the executioners.

José Emilio Galindo Robles

Radio Universidad de Guadalajara

November 24, 2009

Ciudad Guzmán

Galindo’s body, gagged and tied to a bed, was found inside his home in Ciudad Guzmán, western Jalisco state, after he had been missing for several days, local press reports said. The journalist died of a blow to the head, according to authorities quoted in local press reports. Galindo, 43, was the anchor and faculty director of the Ciudad Guzmán-based affiliate of Radio Universidad de Guadalajara.

Galindo reported on environmental issues, a beat that can put Mexican

journalists in conflict with powerful economic interests, colleagues told CPJ. Galindo had not mentioned receiving threats, said Jorge Lomelí, Radio Universidad de Guadalajara’s general producer and a close friend of the journalist.

Galindo, a veteran reporter who had been awarded several national and regional journalism awards, joined Guadalajara University’s radio program in 1993, the university said. He hosted a nightly radio and television program, as well as directing several radio news broadcasts. The university said Galindo also contributed to several local and national newspapers.

State prosecutors, who were investigating Galindo’s death, said they were looking at robbery as a cause but had not discounted other motives, including Galindo’s journalism, according to local news reports.

José Alberto Velázquez López

Expresiones de Tulum

December 22, 2009, Tulum

Velázquez, owner of *Expresiones de Tulum* in the southeastern state of Quintana Roo, was shot shortly after leaving a newspaper Christmas party, according to local news reports. Two men aboard a motorcycle came alongside the publisher’s car, and one assailant fired a pistol that hit Velázquez twice, the paper’s deputy editor, Luis Gamboa, told CPJ. Gravely wounded, Velázquez was transferred to a hospital in Cancún where he died that

night, local press reports said.

Gamboa said the paper had received several anonymous death threats by phone over recent months, and that its printing press had been firebombed in November. Velázquez, who was also a lawyer, had written several articles accusing local officials of corruption, mismanagement, and disdain for the public, Gamboa said.

PAKISTAN: 3

Raja Assad Hameed

The Nation and Waqt TV

March 26, 2009, Rawalpindi

Unidentified gunmen killed Hameed, a reporter with the English-language daily *The Nation* and its Urdu-language television channel, Waqt, while he was parking his car at his house.

Media accounts of the attack varied. Beena Sarwar, a media and human rights activist, looked closely into the murder and described what she found to CPJ: “His family rushed out on hearing the gunshots and found Hameed lying in a pool of blood. The bullets, fired at close range, had pierced his neck and shoulder.” Doctors pronounced the journalist dead on arrival at Benazir Bhutto Hospital.

Hameed was well-known and held in high regard. He was fluent in English, Urdu, and Punjabi, and frequently appeared on Al-Jazeera, analyzing political developments in Pakistan.

Wasi Ahmad Qureshi

Daily Azadi and Balochistan Express
April 16, 2009, Khuzdar

Gunmen fired at point-blank range on Qureshi and his colleague, Muhammad Siddiq Mosiani, near a newsstand in Khuzdar district in the southwestern province of Baluchistan on April 11, according to Qureshi's editor and local news reports. Qureshi was treated in a local hospital for two gunshot wounds to the stomach, but he died five days later, news reports said. Mosiani survived, according to the reports.

The motive for the attack was not immediately clear, according to Asif Baloch, editor of the Quetta-based *Daily Azadi*. Local officials said they were investigating but had made no progress, he said. Although some news reports said militants from the separatist organization Baluchistan Liberation Army carried out the shooting, Baloch said they had not claimed responsibility and had no known reason to attack the journalist.

Siddique Bacha Khan, Aaj TV

August 14, 2009, Mardan

Unidentified assailants shot Bacha Khan in the city of Mardan in Pakistan's restive North West Frontier Province, according to news reports.

A news correspondent for the independent Aaj TV, Bacha Khan was ambushed and shot at close range, the channel reported on its Web site. Earlier, he had interviewed family mem-

bers of a former military official who was killed by the Taliban, and was returning to the office when he was shot, the channel's bureau chief, Imtiaz Awan, said on its Web site.

The journalist died en route to the hospital, according to Aaj TV and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

PHILIPPINES: 2

Badrodin Abbas, DXCM

January 22, 2009, Cotabato City

Abbas was shot in the head by two motorcycle-riding assailants while he was driving a minivan in Cotabato City, according to local news reports. The journalist was a "block-time" commentator, leasing airtime and soliciting his own sponsors, the reports said. He died of a head wound, Police Chief Willie Dangane told reporters.

Dangane said the killing was captured on a closed-circuit video camera, according to news reports. He initially told reporters that Abbas' work may have been a motive, but later said the murder was more likely a result of mistaken identity.

Abbas had established a reputation for hard-hitting commentaries, which included recent pieces on a proposed peace deal between the government and a Muslim rebel group known as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, according to press reports. The two sides had engaged in an on-and-off armed conflict for nearly four decades.

Godofredo Linao Jr., Radyo Natin

July 27, 2009, Barabo

Linao, 49, was shot in Barabo township, Surigao del Sur province, about 545 miles (875 kilometers) from the capital, Manila, according to local press freedom groups and news reports.

Linao hosted a weekly public affairs program called "Straight to the Point" on Radyo Natin, and worked as a disc jockey for another radio station, the reports said. He went to Barabo in response to a text message at around 1 a.m., according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, which quoted Radyo Natin station manager Mario Alviso. The journalist was getting on his motorcycle when two unidentified men fired at him four times.

The motive for the murder was not clear. Task Force USIG, a unit of the Philippines National Police dedicated to investigating media and political murders, said it considered his radio broadcasts a possible motive in the attack. Alviso said he received threatening text messages after Linao's murder, according to the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR).

Linao, a "block-timer" who leased airtime from Radyo Natin, was also a spokesman for provincial Vice Gov. Librado Navarro, according to CMFR. Navarro was a sponsor of the radio program. The journalist's wife told CMFR that he had planned to run as a candidate in the 2010 provincial board elections and had received threats while running for political posts in the past.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: 1

Bruno Jacquet Ossébi, Mwindi

February 2, 2009, Brazzaville

Ossébi, an outspoken columnist for the France-based Congolese online newspaper *Mwindi*, died in a military hospital in the capital, Brazzaville, 12 days after suffering second-degree burns in a mysterious fire at his home that also killed his girlfriend and her 8- and 10-year-old children. French Embassy press attaché Bertrand de Marignan told CPJ that Ossébi, who had dual Congolese and French citizenship, died a day before a scheduled medical evacuation to France.

Ossébi's death certificate, obtained by CPJ, identified the cause of death as "cardio-respiratory arrest." No autopsy was done, according to family members. An attending physician, who spoke to CPJ on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the case, said that the journalist's condition had been improving, but that burn victims are vulnerable to sudden reversals during recovery.

The mystery surrounding the origin and circumstances of the fire, coupled with Ossébi's activism in citizen journalism, led to numerous questions. An official Brazzaville fire service report identified the cause of the blaze as a "short circuit," although Lt. Col. Alphonse Yamboula, commander of the Brazzaville fire rescue center, acknowledged in a CPJ interview that the finding was not

based on any forensic investigation. The landlord of the house ordered the burnt shell bulldozed and cleared within days of the fire.

On February 25, then-Public Prosecutor Alphonse Dinard Mokondzi appointed Jean Michel Opo, an investigating magistrate, to oversee an inquiry. "A man has died in a fire; we want to know whether it was of criminal or accidental origin," Mokondzi told CPJ. The prosecutor's office took an interest in the case because Ossébi was a journalist and "there is a lot of suspicion," he said.

Just four days before the fire, Ossébi wrote a story accusing officials with Congo's national petroleum authority of improperly negotiating a loan with a French bank, according to CPJ research. Neither the government nor the officials named in the story, including Denis Christel Sassou Nguesso, the president's son, publicly commented on the accusations, according to local journalists. Alain Akouala, the government's minister of communication, declined to comment when contacted by CPJ.

Ossébi was noted for his extensive coverage of an international lawsuit scrutinizing the private assets of the ruling families of Congo, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea in France. Transparency International, an anticorruption organization that organized the lawsuit, confirmed the journalist's interest in becoming a plaintiff.

Opo, the magistrate appointed to oversee the investigation, told CPJ in May 2009 that a police commission

had submitted a report without witness statements. He was appointed to another position that month. A new investigative magistrate, Jean-Louis Bitumbu, declined to comment on the investigation.

RUSSIA: 2

Shafiq Amrakhov, RIA 51
January 5, 2009, Murmansk

On December 30, 2008, an unidentified assailant shot and seriously wounded Amrakhov, editor of the online regional news agency RIA 51, in his apartment building in the northern city of Murmansk, the independent news agency Regnum reported. The assailant shot the journalist several times in the head, using what is known as a non-lethal traumatic pistol, the local press reported.

According to local press reports, Amrakhov was conscious immediately after the attack and managed to give his family details. He was taken to a Murmansk hospital, where he underwent several hours of surgery. He slipped into a coma after the surgery and died on January 5, Regnum reported.

Several local reports said the choice of weapon suggested the attacker intended to intimidate the journalist but not necessarily kill him. On January 22, Gen. Vitaly Fedotov, head of the Murmansk region police department, told the local channel TV-21 that investigators had ruled out Amrakhov's

journalism as a motive. He would not disclose what investigators believed the motive was.

The Moscow-based Glasnost Defense Foundation said the journalist suffered a concussion in a 1997 attack in which an unknown assailant struck him with a blunt object in the entrance to his apartment building. In February 2008, Amrakhov publicly protested the authorities' decision to deny him accreditation for then-President Vladimir Putin's last press conference as head of state. In his public letter, carried by local media, he criticized the economic policies of Murmansk Gov. Yuri Yevdokimov.

Vyacheslav Yaroshenko
Korrupsiya i Prestupnost
June 29, 2009, Rostov-on-Don

On June 29, 2009, Yaroshenko, editor-in-chief of the Rostov-on-Don newspaper *Korrupsiya i Prestupnost*, died of head injuries he received in an April 30 attack, in which he was found un-

conscious with a head wound in the entrance to his apartment building. He was hospitalized with skull and brain trauma, underwent surgery, and spent five days in a coma, his deputy, Sergei Sleptsov, told CPJ at the time.

Sleptsov told Russian news outlets in June that he believed Yaroshenko was attacked in retaliation for the newspaper's work. *Korrupsiya i Prestupnost*, an independent paper whose title translates to "Corruption and Crime," had reported on corruption allegations involving Rostov law enforcement agencies.

Rostov law enforcement officials gave conflicting accounts of what happened to Yaroshenko in April. Immediately after the journalist was hospitalized, Rostov police said he was injured in a fistfight on a local street, Grigory Bochkaryov, a local correspondent for the Russian service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, told CPJ. Police later said that Yaroshenko had injured himself by falling down the stairs in the entrance of his apartment building, according to Bochkaryov.

3 MEDIA SUPPORT WORKERS KILLED

PAKISTAN: 1

Mian Iqbal Shah
Peshawar Press Club
December 22, 2009, Peshawar

Shah, 50, an employee of the Peshawar Press Club, was among those killed when a suicide bomber attempting to enter the property set off an explosive

device. A police officer, the bomber, and a bystander were killed along with Shah, an accountant and cashier at the club, according to news accounts. Twenty-six people were reported injured.

The explosion occurred at 11:40 a.m. when Riazuddin Khan, a police constable providing security for the club, halted the bomber near the gate to the property, club members said.

The force of the explosion blew out press club windows, damaged a guard hut, and tore apart nearby vehicles. The club had recently upgraded security because members had received increasing threats from militant groups.

“We were saved because this brave officer sacrificed his own life to save us,” Iqbal Khattak, Peshawar bureau chief of the *Daily Times*, told CPJ in an e-mail message a day after the attack. Press clubs, a tradition in major Pakistani cities, are used by the media as meeting halls and venues for press conferences. More than 30 journalists were inside the club awaiting the start of a press conference when the bomb exploded, news reports said.

PHILIPPINES: 2

Benjie Adolfo, *Gold Star Daily*
Daniel Tiamson, UNTV
November 23, 2009, Ampatuan

In the deadliest event for the press ever recorded by CPJ, 29 journalists and drivers Adolfo and Tiamson were ambushed and brutally slain as they traveled in Maguindanao province with a convoy of people who intended to file gubernatorial candidacy papers for a local politician. In all, 57 people were killed in the attack, which was apparently motivated by political clan rivalries.

A full account of the case and a list of the victims appear on pages 246-250.

Section break (opposite): Reuters/Buddhika Weerasinghe—*Sri Lankan columnist J.S. Tissainayagam, serving a 20-year prison term, is among 136 journalists jailed worldwide.*



AS NEWS BUSINESS EVOLVES, FREELANCERS ARE UNDER FIRE

FREELANCERS MADE UP NEARLY 45 PERCENT OF ALL NEWS MEDIA workers jailed worldwide, a dramatic recent increase that reflects the evolution of the global news business, CPJ found in its annual census of imprisoned journalists. In all, the survey identified 136 reporters, editors, and photojournalists behind bars on December 1, 2009, an increase of 11 from the 2008 tally. A massive crackdown in Iran, where 23 journalists were in jail, fueled the worldwide increase.

China continued to be the world's worst jailer of journalists, a dishonor it has held for 11 consecutive years. Iran, Cuba, Eritrea, and Burma rounded out the top five jailers from among the 26 nations that imprisoned journalists. Each of the five has persistently placed among the world's worst in detaining journalists.

At least 60 freelance journalists were behind bars worldwide, nearly double the number from just three years ago. CPJ research shows the number of jailed freelancers has grown along with two trends: The Internet has enabled individual journalists to publish on their own, and some news organizations, watchful of costs, rely increasingly on freelancers rather than staffers for international coverage. Freelance journalists are especially vulnerable to imprisonment because they often do not have the legal and monetary support that news organizations can provide to staffers.

The number of online journalists in prison continued a decade-long rise, CPJ's census found. At least 68 bloggers, Web-based reporters, and online editors were imprisoned, constituting half of all journalists in jail. Print reporters, editors, and photographers made up the next largest professional category, with 51 cases in 2009. Television and radio journalists and documentary filmmakers constituted the rest.

Although antistate allegations such as sedition were the most common charge used to imprison journalists worldwide, CPJ's census identified an alarming rise in the number of cases in which governments bypassed due process and filed no charge at all. In 39 cases—more than a quarter of the overall census—authorities disclosed no formal charges. The tactic was used by countries as wide-ranging as Eritrea, Iran, and the United States.

Without the legal protection of formal charges or court proceedings, at least 20 of those journalists were being held in secret locations. Many were in the custody of the Eritrean government, which refused to even confirm whether its detainees were still alive. Unconfirmed online reports have said that three journalists jailed in Eritrea may have died in custody. CPJ continued to list these journalists in its 2009 census as a means of holding the government responsible for their fates.

The number of journalists imprisoned in China has dropped over the past

several years, but with 24 still behind bars the nation remained the world's worst jailer of the press. Of those in jail in China, 22 were freelancers. They included Dhondup Wangchen, a documentary filmmaker who was detained in 2008 after recording footage in Tibet and sending it to colleagues overseas. A 25-minute film titled "Jigdrel" (Leaving Fear Behind), produced from the footage, features ordinary Tibetans talking about their lives under Chinese rule. Officials in Xining, Qinghai province, charged the filmmaker with inciting separatism.

Most of those imprisoned in Iran, the world's second-worst jailer, were swept up in the government's post-election crackdown on dissent and the news media. Of those, about half were online journalists. They included Fariba Pajooh, a freelance reporter for online, newspaper, and radio outlets. Radio France Internationale reported that she was charged with "propagating against the regime" and pressured to make a false confession.

Cuba, the third-worst jailer, was holding 22 writers and editors in prison, all but two of whom were rounded up in Fidel Castro's massive 2003 crackdown on the independent press. Many have seen their health deteriorate in inhumane and unsanitary prisons. The detainees included Normando Hernández González, who suffered from cardiovascular ailments and knee problems so severe that even standing was difficult. Hernández González was moved to a prison hospital in late October.

Eritrea was the world's fourth-worst jailer, imprisoning 19 journalists as of December 1. Eritrean authorities have jailed not only independent reporters but their own, state-employed journalists as well. The government arrested six state journalists in early 2009 on suspicion that they had provided information to foreign news organizations and Web sites.

With nine journalists behind bars, Burma was the world's fifth-worst jailer. Those in custody included the video journalist known publicly as "T," who reported news for the Oslo-based media organization Democratic Voice of Burma and who helped film an award-winning international documentary, "Orphans of the Burmese Cyclone." Journalism is so dangerous in Burma, one of the world's most censored countries, that undercover reporters such as "T" are a crucial conduit to the world.

The Eurasian nations of Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan placed sixth and seventh on CPJ's dishonor roll. Uzbekistan was holding seven journalists, among them Dilmurod Saiid, a freelancer who exposed government agricultural abuses. Azerbaijan was jailing six reporters and editors, including investigative journalist Eynulla Fatullayev, a 2009 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee.

Here are other trends and details that emerged in CPJ's analysis:

- » About 47 percent of journalists in the census were jailed under antistate charges such as sedition, divulging state secrets, and acting against national

interests, CPJ found. Many of them were being held by the Chinese, Iranian, and Cuban governments.

- » In about 12 percent of cases, governments used a variety of charges unrelated to journalism to retaliate against critical writers, editors, and photojournalists. Such charges ranged from regulatory violations to drug possession. In the cases included in this census, CPJ has determined that the charges were most likely lodged in reprisal for the journalist's work.
- » Violations of censorship rules, the next most common charge, were applied in about 5 percent of cases. Charges of criminal defamation, reporting "false" news, and engaging in ethnic or religious "insult" constituted the other charges filed against journalists in the census.
- » Internet and print journalists made up the bulk of the census. Radio journalists composed the next largest professional category, accounting for 7 percent of cases. Television journalists and documentary filmmakers each accounted for 3 percent.
- » The worldwide tally of 136 reflected a 9 percent increase over 2008 and represented the third-highest number recorded by CPJ in the past decade. (The decade high came in 2002, when CPJ recorded 139 journalists in jail.)
- » The United States, which was holding freelance photographer Ibrahim Jassam without charge in Iraq, made CPJ's list of countries jailing journalists for the sixth consecutive year. During this period, U.S. military authorities have jailed numerous journalists in Iraq—some for days, others for months at a time—without charge or due process. U.S. authorities appeared to be using this tactic less frequently in the past two years.

CPJ believes that journalists should not be imprisoned for doing their jobs. The organization has sent letters expressing its serious concerns to each country that has imprisoned a journalist. In 2009, CPJ advocacy helped lead to the release of at least 45 imprisoned journalists.

CPJ's list is a snapshot of those incarcerated at midnight on December 1, 2009. It does not include the many journalists imprisoned and released throughout the year; accounts of those cases can be found at cpj.org. Journalists remain on CPJ's list until the organization determines with reasonable certainty that they have been released or have died in custody.

Journalists who either disappear or are abducted by nonstate entities, including criminal gangs, rebels, or militant groups, are not included in the census. Their cases, classified as "missing" or "abducted," are documented on CPJ's Web site.

136 JOURNALISTS IMPRISONED AS OF 12/1/2009

AZERBAIJAN: 6

Eynulla Fatullayev
Realny Azerbaijan
 and *Gündalik Azarbaycan*
 IMPRISONED: April 20, 2007

Authorities jailed Fatullayev, editor of the now-closed independent Russian-language weekly *Realny Azerbaijan* and the Azeri-language daily *Gündalik Azarbaycan*, after convicting him on a series of politically motivated criminal charges.

The persecution of Fatullayev began shortly after he published an article alleging an official cover-up in the 2005 slaying of journalist Elmar Huseynov, editor of the opposition weekly *Monitor*. Fatullayev was an investigative reporter for the *Monitor*, which closed after the murder.

Fatullayev launched *Realny Azerbaijan* as a successor to the *Monitor*—and he set out to find Huseynov's killers. In March 2007, he produced an in-depth article that charged Azerbaijani authorities with ignoring evidence in the murder and obstructing the investigation. The piece, "Lead and Roses," alleged that Huseynov's murder was ordered by high-ranking officials in Baku and carried out by a criminal group.

Within a month, in April 2007, a Yasamal District Court judge convicted Fatullayev of defaming the entire Azerbaijani population in an Internet posting that was falsely attributed to

him. The posting, published on several Web sites, said Azerbaijanis bore some responsibility for the 1992 killings of residents of the restive Nagorno-Karabakh region, according to local news reports. Fatullayev was sentenced to a 30-month term and jailed immediately, according to the independent news agency Turan.

With Fatullayev jailed, authorities evicted *Realny Azerbaijan* and *Gündalik Azarbaycan* from their Baku offices, citing purported fire safety and building code violations. Both later stopped publishing.

More charges followed. In October 2007, a judge in the Azerbaijani Court of Serious Crimes found Fatullayev guilty of terrorism, incitement to ethnic hatred, and tax evasion. Fatullayev's sentences were consolidated, and he was ordered to serve eight years and six months in prison in all. The terrorism and incitement charges stemmed from a *Realny Azerbaijan* commentary headlined "The Aliyevs Go to War," which sharply criticized President Ilham Aliyev's foreign policy regarding Iran. The tax evasion charge alleged that Fatullayev had concealed income from his two publications.

The Supreme Court denied Fatullayev's appeal in June 2008, ending domestic legal avenues. Fatullayev appealed to the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights, which began reviewing the case in September 2008, his lawyer, Isakhan Ashurov, told

CPJ. The case was pending in late year.

In November, CPJ honored Fatul-layev with its International Press Freedom Award.

Genimet Zakhidov, *Azadlyg*
IMPRISONED: November 10, 2007

On November 7, 2007, an unknown couple assailed Zakhidov, editor of the pro-opposition daily *Azadlyg*, on a Baku street. Zakhidov told local reporters that the woman started screaming as if he had insulted her; a moment later, the man tried to attack him. With the help of passers-by, the journalist said, he was able to fend them off. But the couple later filed a complaint with police, claiming that the editor had assaulted them.

Authorities acted with remarkable speed: On November 10, 2007, a judge at the Yasamal District Court of Baku placed Zakhidov in pretrial detention after police had interrogated him for nine hours. He was charged with “hooliganism” and inflicting “minor bodily harm.”

Zakhidov had long been at odds with authorities because of his work for one of Azerbaijan’s most critical newspapers. He is also the brother of prominent satirist Sakit Zakhidov, who was also jailed at the time on politicized charges. Sakit Zakhidov was released in April 2009, having served all but two and a half months of a three-year prison term.

On March 7, 2008, a Baku district court sentenced Genimet Zakhidov

to four years in jail, despite contradictory testimony from prosecution witnesses and the absence of any evidence of “bodily harm,” the journalist’s lawyer, Elchin Sadygov, told CPJ. Eyewitnesses for the defense were barred from testifying, he said. Zakhidov was given the maximum penalty allowed by law.

In September 2009, the Azizbayov District Court in Baku rejected a defense bid for a lighter punishment, the independent news Web site *Kavkazsky Uzel* reported. The court’s stated reason: Zakhidov had been reprimanded after he refused to join a volleyball game with inmates, the Baku-based Institute for Reporters’ Freedom and Safety reported.

Adnan Hajizade, freelance
Emin Milli, freelance
IMPRISONED: July 8, 2009

Baku police detained Milli, 30, publisher of the blog *ANTV*, and Hajizade, 26, a video blogger and coordinator of the Azerbaijani youth movement *Ol! (Yes!)*, after the two reported that they had been attacked at a local restaurant.

Milli and Hajizade were debating politics with friends when two unknown men interrupted their conversation and started a brawl, they said. When the bloggers went to report the assault to local police, they were arrested for “hooliganism,” a criminal charge that carries up to five years in jail. A second charge of “inflicting bodily harm” was added in August. On November

11, a Sabail District Court judge pronounced the bloggers guilty, sentencing Milli to two and a half years in jail and Hajizade to two years.

Shortly before their detention, Milli and Hajizade had posted video sketches that criticized Azerbaijani government policies. They interviewed local residents and posted their opinions online, sharing them through YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other sites. Among the issues discussed on their blogs were education, corruption, and poor infrastructure in Azerbaijan, according to multiple news reports and CPJ sources.

Domestic and international rights groups condemned the arrests of Milli and Hajizade as staged by authorities in retaliation for the critical content of their blogs. According to multiple sources, a satirical video the bloggers produced and posted on YouTube in late June may have prompted their arrests. The video criticized the country’s importation of donkeys, supposedly at high prices. The sketch depicted a fictional press conference at which Hajizade, wearing a donkey suit, talked to a group of Azerbaijani “journalists.”

Sardar Alibeili, *Nota*
Faramaz Novruzoglu
(Faramaz Allahverdiyev), *Nota*
IMPRISONED: October 8, 2009

Editor-in-Chief Alibeili and reporter Novruzoglu were sentenced to three months in prison on charges of insulting the chairman of the pro-government

organization *Azadlyg Harakatchilari* (Freedom Movement) in six *Nota* articles, according to local press reports and CPJ sources. The articles, published in February and March, accused the group and its chairman, Tahmasib Novruzov, of being government mouthpieces, according to CPJ sources.

In October, the Baku Court of Appeal upheld a trial court’s guilty verdict. Alibeili and Novruzoglu, who is also known as Faramaz Allahverdiyev, were taken to prison immediately after the appellate verdict was read.

Novruzoglu and Alibeili had been targeted with criminal defamation complaints in the past. In January 2007, Novruzoglu was given a two-year prison term and Alibeili an 18-month corrective labor sentence on charges of defaming Interior Minister Ramil Usubov in a series of articles that discussed friction and alleged corruption in the ministry. Novruzoglu’s health deteriorated in prison and, after a barrage of domestic and international protests, he was released on a presidential pardon in December 2007.

BURMA: 9

Ne Min (Win Shwe), freelance
IMPRISONED: February 2004

Ne Min, a lawyer and a former stringer for the BBC, was sentenced to 15 years in prison on May 7, 2004, on charges that he illegally passed information to “antigovernment” organizations oper-

ating in border areas, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma, a prisoner assistance group based in Thailand.

It was the second time that Burma's military government had imprisoned the well-known journalist, also known as Win Shwe, on charges related to disseminating information to news sources outside of Burma. In 1989, a military tribunal sentenced Ne Min to 14 years of hard labor for "spreading false news and rumors to the BBC to fan further disturbances in the country" and "possession of documents including antigovernment literature, which he planned to send to the BBC," according to official radio reports. He served nine years at Rangoon's Insein Prison before being released in 1998.

Exiled Burmese journalists who spoke with CPJ said that Ne Min had provided news to political groups and exile-run news publications before his second arrest in February 2004.

Nay Phone Latt (Nay Myo Kyaw)
Freelance

IMPRISONED: January 29, 2008

Nay Phone Latt, a businessman also known as Nay Myo Kyaw, wrote a blog and owned three Internet cafés in Rangoon. He went missing on the morning of January 29, 2008, according to exile-run news groups.

The New Delhi-based Mizzima news agency reported that police had detained Nay Phone Latt at an Internet café. The journalist, whose Web

site offered perspectives on Burmese youth, had been a youth member of the opposition group National League for Democracy, Reuters said.

A court charged Nay Phone Latt in July 2008 with causing public offense and violating video and electronic laws when he posted caricatures of ruling generals on his blog, according to Reuters. He was being held at the time in Insein Prison, according to a joint report by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma and the U.S. Campaign for Burma.

During closed judicial proceedings held at the Insein compound on November 10, 2008, Nay Phone Latt was sentenced on several counts under the penal code to a total of 20 years and six months in prison, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom advocacy group, and news reports. In late 2008, he was transferred to Pa-an Prison in Karen state, news reports said.

In February 2009, the Rangoon Divisional Court commuted the sentence to a total of 12 years. Nay Phone Latt's lawyers continued to challenge the conviction and appeared before the High Court on June 22, according to Mizzima. The court turned back the appeal.

Sein Win Maung
Myanmar Nation

IMPRISONED: February 15, 2008

Police conducting a raid on the offices of the weekly *Myanmar Nation* arrested editor Thet Zin and manager

Sein Win Maung, according to local and international news reports. Police also seized the journalists' cell phones, footage of monk-led antigovernment demonstrations that took place in Burma in September 2007, and a report by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, U.N. special rapporteur for human rights in Burma, according to Aung Din, director of the Washington-based U.S. Campaign for Burma. The report detailed killings associated with the military government's crackdown on the 2007 demonstrators.

The New Delhi-based Mizzima news agency cited family members as saying that the two were first detained in the Thingangyun Township police station before being charged with illegal printing and publishing on February 25.

On November 28, 2008, a closed court at the Insein Prison compound sentenced each to seven years in prison.

Police ordered *Myanmar Nation's* staff to stop publishing temporarily, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom advocacy group with representatives in Bangkok. The news Web site *Irrawaddy* said the newspaper was allowed to resume publishing in March 2008; by October of that year, exile-run groups said, the journal had shut down for lack of leadership.

Thet Zin was among 7,000 prisoners released as part of a government amnesty on September 17, 2009, according to international news reports. His colleague remained behind bars in late year.

Maung Thura (Zarganar), freelance
IMPRISONED: June 4, 2008

Police arrested Maung Thura, a well-known comedian who used the online and stage name Zarganar, or "Tweezers," at his home in Rangoon, according to news reports. The police also seized electronic equipment at the time of the arrest, according to Agence France-Presse.

Maung Thura had mobilized hundreds of entertainers to help survivors of Cyclone Nargis, which devastated Rangoon and much of the Irrawaddy Delta in May 2008. His footage of relief work in hard-hit areas was circulated on DVD and on the Internet. Photographs and DVD footage of the aftermath of the disaster were among the items police confiscated at the time of his arrest, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma and the U.S. Campaign for Burma.

In the week he was detained, Maung Thura gave several interviews to overseas-based news outlets, including the BBC, criticizing the military junta's response to the disaster. The day after his arrest, state-controlled media published warnings against sending video footage of relief work to foreign news agencies.

During closed proceedings in August 2008 at Insein Prison in Rangoon, the comedian was indicted on at least seven charges, according to international news reports.

On November 21, 2008, the court sentenced Maung Thura to 45 years

in prison on three separate counts of violating the Electronic Act. Six days later, the court added 14 years to his term after convicting him on charges of communicating with exiled dissidents and causing public alarm in interviews with foreign media, his defense lawyer, Khin Htay Kywe, told *The Associated Press*. The sentence was later reduced to a total of 35 years by the Rangoon Divisional Court.

Maung Thura had been detained on several occasions in the past, including in September 2007 for helping Buddhist monks during antigovernment protests, according to the exile-run press freedom group Burma Media Association. He had maintained a blog, *Zarganar-window*, which his supporters continued to update in 2009.

The Democratic Voice of Burma reported that Maung Thura had been transferred to a remote location, Myintkyinar Prison in Kachin state, in December 2008, where he was reported in poor health. His sister-in-law, Ma Nyein, told *Irawaddy* that the journalist suffered from hypertension and jaundice.

Zaw Thet Htwe, freelance
IMPRISONED: June 13, 2008

Police arrested Rangoon-based freelance journalist Zaw Thet Htwe on June 13, 2008, in the town of Minbu, where he was visiting his mother, Agence France-Presse reported. The sportswriter had been working with comedian-blogger Maung Thura in delivering aid to victims of Cyclone Nar-

gis and videotaping the relief effort.

The journalist, who formerly edited the popular sports newspaper *First Eleven*, was indicted in a closed tribunal on August 7, 2008, and was tried along with Maung Thura and two activists, AFP reported. The group faced multiple charges, including violating the Video Act and Electronic Act, disrupting public order, and unlawful association, news reports said.

The Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma said police confiscated a computer and cell phone during a raid on Zaw Thet Htwe's Rangoon home.

In November 2008, Zaw Thet Htwe was sentenced to a total of 19 years in prison on charges of violating the Electronic Act, according to the Mizzima news agency. The Rangoon Divisional Court later reduced the prison term to 11 years, Mizzima reported. He was put in Taunggyi Prison in Shan state in 2009.

Zaw Thet Htwe had been arrested before, in 2003, and given the death sentence for plotting to overthrow the government, news reports said. The sentence was later commuted. AFP reported that the 2003 arrest was related to a story he published about a misappropriated football grant.

Aung Kyaw San, Myanmar Tribune
IMPRISONED: June 15, 2008

Aung Kyaw San, editor-in-chief of the *Myanmar Tribune*, was arrested in Rangoon along with 15 others return-

ing from relief activities in the Irrawaddy Delta region, which was devastated by Cyclone Nargis, according to the Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPPB) and the Mizzima news agency.

Photographs that Aung Kyaw San had taken of cyclone victims appeared on some Web sites, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom group run by exiled journalists. Authorities closed the Burmese-language weekly after his arrest and did not allow his family visitation rights, according to the association. On April 10, 2009, a special court in Insein Prison sentenced him to two years' imprisonment for unlawful association, Mizzima reported.

Aung Kyaw San was formerly jailed in 1990 and held for more than three years for activities with the country's pro-democracy movement, AAPPB said.

"T," Democratic Voice of Burma
IMPRISONED: July 2009

The video journalist known publicly as "T" reported news for the Oslo-based media organization Democratic Voice of Burma. He was one of two cameramen on an award-winning international documentary, "Orphans of the Burmese Cyclone," according to news reports.

The Rory Peck Trust announced the arrest on November 18 as it honored "T" and his Burmese colleague, "Z," with the Rory Peck Award for Features for their work on the documentary. The independent U.K.-based Rory

Peck Trust supports freelance journalists. It said "T" had been arrested four months earlier and had recently been charged under the Electronic Act with filming without government permission. Khin Maung Win, deputy executive director of the Democratic Voice of Burma, confirmed the arrest in a November 30 report on the organization's Web site. He said "Z" was in hiding.

"T" was arrested as he left an Internet café in Rangoon six months after completing the documentary, according to the U.K.-based *The Independent*. The exact date was not reported. He was being held in Insein Prison, according to *The Independent*. "T" faced a jail sentence of 10 to 15 years, news reports said.

Thant Zin Soe, Foreign Affairs
IMPRISONED: October 27, 2009

Police and military intelligence officials arrested Thant Zin Soe, an editor and translator at the news-weekly *Foreign Affairs*, at his home in Rangoon, according to the exile-run groups Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma and Burma Media Association.

Thant Zin Soe was also a member of the Lin Let Kye (Shining Star) volunteer relief group, which provided unsanctioned relief to Cyclone Nargis survivors and has been targeted by authorities for persecution. No formal charges had been filed against him by December 1, according to the groups. He was being held at the Aung Thabye

Detention Center in Rangoon, according to the Burma Media Association.

Paing Soe Oo (Jay Paing), freelance
IMPRISONED: October 28, 2009

Six officials arrested Paing Soe Oo in his apartment in Rangoon, according to the exile-run Mizzima news agency. Officials searched his home and seized one of the journalist's notebooks, the report said.

Paing Soe Oo, who formerly worked for the weekly news publications *Favorite* and *Pyi Myanmar*, is a freelance online commentator writing under the name Jay Paing. He also was a member of the volunteer relief group Lin Let Kye (Shining Star), which provided unsanctioned relief to Cyclone Nargis survivors and has been targeted by authorities for persecution.

Maung Thura, an organizing member of Lin Let Kye, was serving a total of 35 years for communicating with exiled dissidents and giving interviews to foreign media that criticized the government's disaster relief efforts.

CAMBODIA: 1

Hang Chakra, *Khmer Machas Srok*
IMPRISONED: June 26, 2009

The editor-in-chief of the opposition Khmer-language daily was sentenced in absentia to one year in prison stemming from his reports on alleged government corruption, according to local and inter-

national news reports. He was arrested later in his home and imprisoned in Prey Sar Prison near the capital, Phnom Penh, according to the reports.

A Cambodian court ruled that a series of articles published by the daily in April and May, accusing officials working under Deputy Prime Minister Sok An of corruption, had violated criminal disinformation laws. The court also fined Hang Chakra 9 million riels (US\$2,250), according to the Southeast Asian Press Alliance. Hang Chakra said he stood by his coverage.

Cambodian officials sentenced Hang Chakra under the penal code enacted by the former U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which allows criminal prosecution and jail terms of up to three years for disinformation. UNTAC's legal authority expired with the promulgation of a new national constitution in 1993, so the use of the criminal code suggests officials had targeted the editor for imprisonment.

Cambodia's National Assembly decriminalized defamation in 2007, and the country's 1995 Press Law broadly protects press freedoms. Publishing "false" information remains a criminal offense, but with a lesser fine of up to 5 million riels (US\$1,250), according to the *The Phnom Penh Post*.

An appeal court upheld the sentence on August 11, according to local news reports. King Norodom Sihamoni wrote to Prime Minister Hun Sen on October 27 requesting the journalist's release, other news reports said.

CAMEROON: 1

Lewis Medjo, *La Détente Libre*
IMPRISONED: September 22, 2008

On January 7, 2009, a judge in the commercial city of Douala sentenced Medjo, editor of the weekly tabloid *La Détente Libre*, to three years in prison and a fine of 2 million CFA francs (US\$4,500) on charges of publishing false news, according to local journalists and news reports. Medjo was being held at Douala's New Bell Prison.

Medjo was arrested in September 2008 in connection with a column incorrectly speculating that President Paul Biya had fired Alexis Dipanda Mouelle, president of the Supreme Court, according to the same sources. The story was based on a presidential decree that did not extend Mouelle's term, according to Editor-in-Chief Michée Medjo Gatheu.

While in detention, Medjo suffered heart trouble, and a doctor at Douala's Laquintinie Hospital diagnosed him with a severe ear infection, according to Gatheu. Medjo was seeking medical parole in late year.

CHINA : 24

Xu Zerong (David Tsui), freelance
IMPRISONED: June 24, 2000

Xu was serving a 13-year prison term on charges of "leaking state secrets" through his academic work on military history

and "economic crimes" related to unauthorized publishing of foreign policy issues. Some observers believed that his jailing may have been related to an article he wrote for the Hong Kong-based *Yazhou Zhoukan* (Asia Weekly) magazine revealing clandestine Chinese Communist Party support for a Malaysian insurgency in the 1950s and 1960s.

Xu, a permanent resident of Hong Kong, was arrested in Guangzhou and held incommunicado for 18 months until his trial. He was tried by the Shenzhen Intermediate Court in December 2001, and his appeal to Guangzhou Higher People's Court was rejected in 2002.

According to court documents, the "state secrets" charges against Xu stemmed from his use of historical documents for academic research. Xu, also known as David Tsui, was an associate research professor at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. In 1992, he photocopied four books published in the 1950s about China's role in the Korean War, which he then sent to a colleague in South Korea.

The verdict stated that the Security Committee of the People's Liberation Army of Guangzhou determined that the books had not been declassified 40 years after being labeled "top secret." After his arrest, St. Antony's College at Oxford University, where Xu earned his doctorate and wrote his dissertation on the Korean War, was active in researching the case and calling for his release.

Xu was also the co-founder of a Hong Kong-based academic journal, *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Jikan* (China Social Sciences Quarterly). The “economic crimes” charges were related to the “illegal publication” of more than 60,000 copies of 25 books and periodicals, including several books about Chinese politics and Beijing’s relations with Taiwan.

He was arrested just days before an article appeared in the June 26, 2000, issue of *Yazhou Zhoukan*, in which he accused the Communist Party of hypocrisy when it condemned countries that criticized China’s human rights record.

Xu began his sentence in Dongguan Prison, outside of Guangzhou, but was later transferred to Guangzhou Prison, where it was easier for his family to visit him. He was spared from hard labor and was allowed to read, research, and teach English in prison, according to the U.S.-based prisoner advocacy group Dui Hua Foundation. He suffered from high blood pressure and diabetes.

In 2006, Xu’s family members were informed that he had received a nine-month reduction in his sentence, according to Dui Hua. He was given another 10-month reduction in April, and is scheduled for release in 2011, the group reported.

Jin Haike, freelance

Xu Wei, freelance

IMPRISONED: March 13, 2001

Jin and Xu were among four members of an informal discussion group called

Xin Qingnian Xuehui (New Youth Study Group) who were detained and accused of “subverting state authority.” Prosecutors cited online articles and essays on political and social reform as proof of their intent to overthrow the Communist Party leadership.

The two men, along with their colleagues, Yang Zili and Zhang Honghai, were charged with subversion on April 20, 2001. More than two years later, on May 29, 2003, the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Jin and Xu each to 10 years in prison, while Yang and Zhang each received sentences of eight years. All of the sentences were to be followed by two years’ deprivation of political rights.

The four young men were students and recent university graduates who gathered occasionally to discuss politics and reform with four others, including an informant for the Ministry of State Security. The most prominent in the group, Yang, posted his own thoughts, as well as reports by the others, on topics such as rural poverty and village elections, along with essays advocating democratic reform, on the popular Web site *Yangzi de Sixiang Jiayuan* (Yangzi’s Garden of Ideas). Xu was a reporter at *Xiaofei Ribao* (Consumer’s Daily). Public security agents pressured the newspaper to fire him before his arrest, a friend, Wang Ying, reported online.

The court cited a handful of articles, including Jin’s “Be a New Citizen, Reform China” and Yang’s “Choose Liberalism,” in the 2003 verdict against them. The Beijing High People’s Court re-

jected their appeal without hearing defense witnesses. Three of the witnesses who testified against the four men were fellow members of the group and later tried to retract their testimonies.

Yang and Zhang were released on the expiration of their sentences on March 13, 2009, according to international news reports. Xu and Jin remained imprisoned at Beijing’s No. 2 Prison. Jin’s father told CPJ in October that his son was suffering from abdominal pain, for which he had undergone surgery in 2007. Xu was suffering from psychological stress while in prison, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center.

Abdulghani Memetemin, freelance

IMPRISONED: July 26, 2002

Memetemin, a writer, teacher, and translator who had actively advocated for the Uighur ethnic group in the northwestern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, was detained in Kashgar, Xinjiang province, on charges of “leaking state secrets.”

In June 2003, the Kashgar Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Memetemin to nine years in prison, plus a three-year suspension of political rights. Radio Free Asia provided CPJ with court documents listing 18 specific counts against him, which included translating state news articles into Chinese from Uighur; forwarding official speeches to the Germany-based East Turkistan Information Center (ETIC), a news outlet that advocates for an in-

dependent state for the Uighur ethnic group; and conducting original reporting for ETIC. The court also accused him of recruiting reporters for ETIC, which is banned in China.

Memetemin did not have legal representation at his trial.

Huang Jinqiu (Qing Shuijun,

Huang Jin), freelance

IMPRISONED: September 13, 2003

Huang, a columnist for the U.S.-based Web site *Boxun News*, was arrested in Jiangsu province, and his family was not notified of his arrest for more than three months. On September 27, 2004, the Changzhou Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him to 12 years in prison on charges of “subversion of state authority,” plus four years’ deprivation of political rights. The sentence was unusually harsh and appeared linked to his intention to form an opposition party.

Huang worked as a writer and editor in his native Shandong province, as well as in Guangdong province, before leaving China in 2000 to study journalism at the Central Academy of Art in Malaysia. While he was overseas, he began writing political commentary for *Boxun News* under the pen name Qing Shuijun. He also wrote articles on arts and entertainment under the name Huang Jin. Huang’s writings reportedly caught the attention of the government in 2001. He told a friend that authorities had contacted his family to warn them about his writings, according to *Boxun News*.

In January 2003, Huang wrote in his online column that he intended to form a new opposition party, the China Patriot Democracy Party. When he returned to China in August 2003, he eluded public security agents just long enough to visit his family in Shandong province. In the last article he posted on *Boxun News*, titled "Me and My Public Security Friends," he described being followed and harassed by security agents.

Huang's appeal was rejected in December 2004. He was given a 22-month sentence reduction in July 2007, according to the U.S.-based prisoner advocacy group Dui Hua Foundation. The journalist, who suffered from arthritis, was serving his sentence in Pukou Prison in Jiangsu province.

Kong Youping, freelance
IMPRISONED: December 13, 2003

Kong, an essayist and poet, was arrested in Anshan, Liaoning province. A former trade union official, he had written articles online that supported democratic reforms, appealed for the release of then-imprisoned Internet writer Liu Di, and called for a reversal of the government's "counterrevolutionary" ruling on the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1989.

Kong's essays included an appeal to democracy activists in China that stated, "In order to work well for democracy, we need a well-organized, strong, powerful, and effective organization. Otherwise, a mainland democracy

movement will accomplish nothing." Several of his articles and poems were posted on the *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum) Web site.

In 1998, Kong served time in prison after he became a member of the Liaoning province branch of the China Democracy Party (CDP), an opposition party. In 2004, he was tried on subversion charges along with co-defendant Ning Xianhua, who was accused of being vice chairman of the CDP branch in Liaoning, according to the U.S.-based advocacy organization Human Rights in China and court documents obtained by the U.S.-based Dui Hua Foundation. On September 16, 2004, the Shenyang Intermediate People's Court sentenced Kong to 15 years in prison, plus four years' deprivation of political rights. Ning received a 12-year sentence.

Kong suffered from hypertension and was imprisoned in the city of Lingyuan, far from his family. He received a sentence reduction to 10 years after an appeal, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center. In 2009, the group reported that his eyesight was deteriorating.

Shi Tao, freelance
IMPRISONED: November 24, 2004

Shi, the former editorial director of the Changsha-based newspaper *Dangdai Shang Bao* (Contemporary Trade News), was detained near his home in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, in November 2004.

He was formally arrested and charged

with "providing state secrets to foreigners" by sending an e-mail on his Yahoo account to the U.S.-based editor of the Web site *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum). In an anonymous e-mail sent several months before his arrest, Shi transcribed his notes from local propaganda department instructions to his newspaper, which included directives on coverage of the Falun Gong and the upcoming 15th anniversary of the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square.

The National Administration for the Protection of State Secrets retroactively certified the contents of the e-mail as classified, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

On April 27, 2005, the Changsha Intermediate People's Court found Shi guilty and sentenced him to a 10-year prison term. In June of that year, Hunan Province High People's Court rejected his appeal without granting a hearing.

Court documents in the case revealed that Yahoo had supplied information to Chinese authorities that helped them identify Shi as the sender of the e-mail. Yahoo's participation in the identification of Shi and other jailed dissidents raised questions about the role that international Internet companies play in the repression of online speech in China and elsewhere.

In November 2005, CPJ honored Shi in absentia with its annual International Press Freedom Award for his courage in defending the ideals of free expression. In November 2007, members of the U.S. House Committee on

Foreign Affairs rebuked Yahoo executives for their role in the case and for wrongly testifying in earlier hearings that the company did not know the Chinese government's intentions when it sought Shi's account information.

Yahoo, Google, and Microsoft later joined with human rights organizations, academics, and investors to form the Global Network Initiative, which adopted a set of principles to protect online privacy and free expression in October 2008.

Human Rights Watch awarded Shi a Hellman/Hammett grant for persecuted writers in October 2009.

Zheng Yichun, freelance
IMPRISONED: December 3, 2004

Zheng, a former professor, was a regular contributor to overseas news Web sites, including the U.S.-based *Epoch Times*, which is affiliated with the banned religious movement Falun Gong. He wrote a series of editorials that directly criticized the Communist Party and its control of the media.

Because of police warnings, Zheng's family remained silent about his detention in Yingkou, Liaoning province, until state media reported that he had been arrested on suspicion of inciting subversion. Zheng was initially tried by the Yingkou Intermediate People's Court on April 26, 2005. No verdict was announced and, on July 21, he was tried again on the same charges. As in the April 26 trial, proceedings lasted just three hours. Though officially

“open” to the public, the courtroom was closed to all observers except close family members and government officials. Zheng’s supporters and a journalist were prevented from entering, according to a local source.

Prosecutors cited dozens of articles written by the journalist, and listed the titles of several essays in which he called for political reform, increased capitalism in China, and an end to the practice of imprisoning writers. On September 20, the court sentenced Zheng to seven years in prison, to be followed by three years’ deprivation of political rights.

Sources familiar with the case believe that Zheng’s harsh sentence may be linked to Chinese leaders’ objections to the *Epoch Times* series “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party,” which called the Chinese Communist Party an “evil cult” with a “history of killings” and predicted its demise.

Zheng is diabetic, and his health declined after his imprisonment. After his first appeal was rejected, he intended to pursue an appeal in a higher court, but his defense lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, was himself imprisoned in August 2006. Zheng’s family was unable to find another lawyer willing to take the case.

In summer 2008, prison authorities at Jinzhou Prison in Liaoning informed Zheng’s family that he had suffered a brain hemorrhage and received urgent treatment in prison. However, no lawyer would agree to represent Zheng in an appeal for medical parole, according to Zheng Xiaochun, Zheng’s brother, who spoke with CPJ by telephone.

Yang Tongyan (Yang Tianshui)
Freelance

IMPRISONED: December 23, 2005

Yang, commonly known by his pen name Yang Tianshui, was detained along with a friend in Nanjing, eastern China. He was tried on charges of “subverting state authority,” and on May 17, 2006, the Zhenjiang Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him to 12 years in prison.

Yang was a well-known writer and a member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center. He was a frequent contributor to U.S.-based Web sites banned in China, including *Boxun News* and *Epoch Times*. He often wrote critically about the ruling Communist Party, and he advocated the release of Internet writers Zheng Yichun and Zhang Lin.

According to the verdict in Yang’s case, which was translated into English by the U.S.-based Dui Hua Foundation, the harsh sentence against him was related to a fictitious online election, established by overseas Chinese citizens, for a “democratic Chinese transitional government.” His colleagues say that without his prior knowledge, he was elected “secretariat” of the fictional government. He later wrote an article in *Epoch Times* in support of the model.

Prosecutors also accused Yang of transferring money from overseas to Wang Wenjiang, who had been convicted of endangering state security. Yang’s defense lawyer argued that this money was humanitarian assistance to the

family of a jailed dissident and should not have constituted a criminal act.

Believing that the proceedings were fundamentally unjust, Yang did not appeal. He had already spent 10 years in prison for his opposition to the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square in 1989.

In June 2008, Shandong provincial authorities refused to renew the law license of Yang’s lawyer, press freedom advocate Li Jianqiang, who also represented imprisoned journalists Zhang Jianhong and Guo Qizhen. In April 2008, the PEN American Center announced that Yang was a recipient of the PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award.

Guo Qizhen, freelance
IMPRISONED: May 12, 2006

Guo was detained as he prepared to join a hunger strike by the lawyer Gao Zhisheng, who was later jailed. Guo was formally arrested on charges related to his prolific writing for U.S.-based Chinese-language Web sites *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum) and *Epoch Times*.

The Cangzhou Intermediate People’s Court tried Guo on charges of “inciting subversion of state authority” on September 12, 2006. He was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison, plus an additional three years’ deprivation of political rights.

In the case presented to the prosecutor on June 16, 2006, the Cangzhou Public Security Bureau cited several

online essays as proof of Guo’s crimes, including one titled “Letting Some of the People First Get Rich While Others Cannot Make a Living,” in which he accused the Communist Party government of using its policies to support an “autocratic” and “despotic” regime. Guo was critical of corruption and widespread poverty in the country.

In his defense, Guo argued that his criticism of the Communist Party was protected by the Chinese constitution. In March 2007, an appeals court upheld Guo’s conviction.

Three months later, Shandong provincial authorities refused to renew the law license of Guo’s lawyer, press freedom advocate Li Jianqiang, who also represented imprisoned journalists Zhang Jianhong and Yang Tongyan.

Guo is married and has a teenage son. His wife, Zhao Changqing, told CPJ in April 2008 that she had been unable to visit her husband due to the high cost of traveling to the prison. She confirmed that he had suffered beatings that led to a permanent leg injury. The Independent Chinese PEN Center reported in 2009 that he remained dependent on crutches and risked losing the use of a leg altogether. He also suffered from high blood pressure and chest pains.

Zhang Jianhong, freelance
IMPRISONED: September 6, 2006

The founder and editor of the popular news and literary Web site *Aiqinbai* (Aegean Sea) was taken from his home

in Ningbo, in eastern China's Zhejiang province. In October 2006, Zhang was formally arrested on charges of "inciting subversion." He was sentenced to six years in prison by the Ningbo Intermediate People's Court in March 2007, followed by one year's deprivation of political rights.

Authorities did not clarify their allegations against Zhang, but supporters believed they were linked to online articles critical of government actions. An editorial he wrote two days before his detention called attention to international organizations' criticism of the government's human rights record and, in particular, to the poor treatment of journalists and their sources two years before the start of the Olympics. Zhang referred to the situation as "Olympicgate."

Zhang was an author, screenwriter, and reporter who served a year and a half of "re-education through labor" in 1989 on counterrevolutionary charges for his writing in support of protesters. He was dismissed from a position in the local writers association and began working as a freelance writer.

His Web site, *Aiqinbai*, was closed in March 2006 for unauthorized posting of international and domestic news. He had also been a contributor to several U.S.-based Chinese-language Web sites, including *Boxun News*, the pro-democracy forum *Minzhu Lun-tan*, and *Epoch Times*.

In September 2007, Shandong provincial authorities refused to renew the law license of Zhang's lawyer, press

freedom advocate Li Jianqiang, who also represented imprisoned journalists Guo Qizhen and Yang Tongyan.

Zhang's health deteriorated significantly in jail, according to his wife, Dong Min, who spoke with CPJ by telephone in October 2008. He suffered from a debilitating disease affecting the nervous system and was unable to perform basic tasks without help. Appeals for parole on medical grounds were not granted and, by 2009, he was no longer able to write, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center. His scheduled release date is September 2012.

Yang Maodong (Guo Feixiong)

Freelance

IMPRISONED: September 14, 2006

Yang, commonly known by his pen name Guo Feixiong, was a prolific writer, activist, and legal analyst for the Beijing-based Shengzhe law firm. Police detained him in September 2006 after he reported and gave advice on a number of sensitive political cases facing the local government in his home province of Guangdong.

Yang was detained for three months in 2005 for "sending news overseas" and disturbing public order after he reported on attempts by villagers in Taishi village, Guangdong, to oust a village chief. He was eventually released without prosecution, but remained vocal on behalf of rights defenders, giving repeated interviews to foreign journalists. A police beating he sustained in February 2006

prompted a well-known human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, to stage a high-profile hunger strike. Police in Beijing detained Yang for two days that February after he protested several government actions, including the closure of the popular *Yunnan* bulletin board, where he had posted information about the Taishi village case.

Yang's September 2006 arrest was for "illegal business activity," international news reports said. After a 15-month pretrial detention, a court convicted him for illegally publishing a magazine in 2001, according to U.S.-based advocacy groups. One of a series of magazines he published since the 1990s, *Political Earthquake in Shenyang*, exposed one of the largest official graft cases in China's history in Shenyang, Liaoning province, according to the Dui Hua Foundation. CPJ's 2001 International Press Freedom Awardee, Jiang Weiping, spent five years in prison for reporting on the same case for a magazine in Hong Kong.

Yang's magazine had been published without authorization; police interrogated his assistant and confiscated funds in 2001, but the case attracted no further punitive measures until he became involved in activism.

Yang's defense team from the Mo Shaoping law firm in Beijing argued that a five-year limit for prosecuting illegal publishing had expired by the time of his trial, according to the Dui Hua Foundation, which published the defense statement in 2008. But Yang was still sentenced to five years in prison.

Yang has gone on hunger strike

several times to protest ill treatment by authorities in Meizhou Prison in Guangdong. He was brutally forced on at least one of these occasions and remained in poor health, according to the advocacy group Human Rights in China (HRIC). The group said his treatment in the detention center before his trial was so aggressive that he attempted suicide. Police subjected him to around-the-clock interrogations for 13 days, HRIC said, and administered electric shocks. The group also said that his family had been persecuted since his imprisonment: His wife was laid off and his two children were held back in school in retribution for his work.

Sun Lin, freelance

IMPRISONED: May 30, 2007

Nanjing-based reporter Sun was arrested, along with his wife, He Fang, on May 30, 2007, according to the U.S.-based Web site *Boxun News*. Sun had previously documented harassment by authorities in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, as a result of his audio, video, and print reports for the banned Chinese-language news site. *Boxun News* said authorities confiscated a computer and video equipment from the couple at the time of their arrest.

In the arrest warrant, Sun was accused of possessing an illegal weapon, and a police statement issued on June 1, 2007, said he was the leader of a criminal gang. Lawyers met with Sun and He in June, but the couple was lat-

er denied visits from legal counsel and family members, according to a *Boxun News* report. A trial was postponed twice for lack of evidence.

A four-year prison sentence for possessing illegal weapons and assembling a disorderly crowd was delivered on June 30, 2008, in a hearing closed to Sun's lawyers and family, according to The Associated Press.

Witness testimony about Sun's possession of weapons was contradictory, according to news reports. The disorderly crowd charge was based on an incident in 2004, three years prior to his arrest. Police accused him of disturbing the peace while aiding people evicted from their homes, but the journalist claimed he broke no laws.

Sun's wife, He, was given a suspended sentence of 15 months in prison on similar charges, according to Sun's defense lawyer, Mo Shaoping. She was allowed to return home after the hearing. The couple has a 12-year-old daughter.

Prison authorities transferred Sun to Jiangsu province's Pukou Prison in September 2008, according to a report published by *Boxun News*. The report said Nanjing authorities refused to return the confiscated equipment. Since seeking a sentence reduction would involve admitting guilt, Sun resolved to serve the time in full, according to the report.

Qi Chonghuai, freelance
IMPRISONED: June 25, 2007

Qi and a colleague, Ma Shiping,

criticized a local official in Shandong province in an article published June 8, 2007, on the Web site of the U.S.-based *Epoch Times*, according to Qi's lawyer, Li Xiongbing. On June 14, the two posted photographs on Xinhua news agency's anticorruption Web forum showing a luxurious government building in the city of Tengzhou.

Police in Tengzhou detained Ma on June 16 on charges of carrying a false press card. Qi, a journalist of 13 years, was arrested in his home in Jinan, the provincial capital, more than a week later, and charged with fraud and extortion, Li said. Qi was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison on May 13, 2008.

Qi was accused of taking money from local officials while reporting several stories, a charge he denied. The people from whom he was accused of extorting money were local officials threatened by his reporting, Li said. Qi told his lawyer and his wife, Jiao Xia, that police beat him during questioning on August 13, 2007, and again during a break in his trial. The journalist was being held in Tengzhou Prison, a four-hour trip from his family's home, which limited visits.

Ma, a freelance photographer, was sentenced in late 2007 to one and a half years in prison. He was released on schedule in 2009, according to Jiao Xia.

Lü Gengsong, freelance
IMPRISONED: August 24, 2007

The Public Security Bureau in Hangzhou, capital of eastern Zhejiang

province, charged Lü with "inciting subversion of state power," according to human rights groups and news reports. Officials also searched his home and confiscated his computer hard drive and files soon after his detention in August 2007. Police did not notify his wife, Wang Xue'e, of the arrest for more than a month.

The detention was connected to Lü's articles on corruption, land expropriation, organized crime, and human rights abuses, which were published on overseas Web sites. Police told his wife that his writings had "attacked the Communist Party," she told CPJ. The day before his arrest, he reported on the trial and two-year sentence of housing rights activist Yang Yunbiao. Lü, a member of the banned China Democracy Party, was the author of the 2000 book, *Corruption in the Communist Party of China*, which was published in Hong Kong.

Following a closed-door, one-day trial on January 22, 2008, at the Intermediate People's Court in Hangzhou, Lü was found guilty of subversion. The court handed down a four-year jail term during a hearing on February 5, 2008. His wife, Wang Xue'e, told CPJ in October 2008 that her husband was being held in Xijiao Prison in Hangzhou, where she had regular visitation rights.

Hu Jia, freelance
IMPRISONED: December 27, 2007

Police charged Hu, a prominent human rights activist and essayist, with "incite-

ment to subvert state power" based on six online commentaries and two interviews with foreign media in which he criticized the Communist Party. On April 3, 2008, he was sentenced to three and a half years in prison.

Hu had advocated for AIDS patients, defended the rights of farmers, and promoted environmental protection. His writings, which appeared on his blog, criticized the Communist Party's human rights record, called for democratic reform, and condemned government corruption. They included an open letter to the international community about China's failure to fulfill pledges to improve human rights before the 2008 Olympics. He frequently provided information to other activists and foreign media to highlight human rights abuses in China.

Hu's wife, human rights activist Zeng Jinyan, applied in April 2008 for medical parole for her husband, who suffered from chronic liver disease, but the request was turned down, according to updates posted on her blog, *Liao Liao Yuan*. The day of the Olympic opening ceremony in August 2008, Zeng was taken to the city of Dalian, Liaoning province, and only allowed to return to her Beijing home after 16 days. She reported this on her blog with no further explanation.

The European Parliament awarded Hu a prestigious human rights accolade, the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, in October 2008. The Chinese ambassador to the European Union warned that the prize would "bring seri-

ous damage to China-EU relations,” according to The Associated Press.

In October 2008, Hu was transferred to the Beijing Municipal Prison, according to Zeng’s blog. He raised human rights issues in jail, prompting security officials to cut off family visitation rights from November 2008 to February 2009, according to online news reports. Zeng reported that Hu’s health was deteriorating and that the prison did not have facilities to treat his liver condition.

Human Rights Watch awarded Hu a Hellman/Hammett grant for persecuted writers in October 2009.

Dhondup Wangchen

Filming for Tibet

IMPRISONED: March 26, 2008

Police in Tongde, Qinghai province, arrested Wangchen, a Tibetan documentary filmmaker, shortly after he sent footage filmed in Tibet to colleagues, according to the production company, Filming for Tibet. A 25-minute film titled “Jigdrel” (Leaving Fear Behind) was produced from the tapes. Wangchen’s assistant, Jigme Gyatso, was also arrested, once in March 2008, and again in March 2009 after speaking out about his treatment in prison, Filming for Tibet said.

Filming for Tibet was founded in Switzerland by Gyaljong Tsetrin, a relative of Wangchen, who left Tibet in 2002 but maintained contact with people there. Tsetrin told CPJ that he had spoken to Wangchen on

March 25, 2008, but that he had lost contact after that. He learned of the detention only later, after speaking by telephone with relatives.

Filming for the documentary was completed shortly before peaceful protests against Chinese rule of Tibet deteriorated into riots in Lhasa and in Tibetan areas of China in March 2008. The filmmakers had gone to Tibet to ask ordinary people about their lives under Chinese rule in the run-up to the Olympics.

The arrests were first publicized when the documentary was launched in August 2008 before a small group of foreign reporters in a hotel room in Beijing on August 6. A second screening was interrupted by hotel management, according to Reuters.

Officials in Xining, Qinghai province, charged the filmmaker with inciting separatism and replaced the Tibetan’s own lawyer with a government appointee in July 2009, according to international reports. The film company said a closed trial had begun in late 2009, but no results were reported by late year.

Wangchen was born in Qinghai but moved to Lhasa as a young man, according to his biography. He had recently relocated with his wife, Lhamo Tso, and four children to Dharamsala, India, before returning to Tibet to begin filming, according to a report published in October 2008 by the *South China Morning Post*.

Tsetrin told CPJ that Wangchen’s assistant, Gyatso, was arrested on March

23, 2008. Gyatso, released on October 15, 2008, later described having been brutally beaten by interrogators during his seven months in detention, according to Filming in Tibet. The Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy reported that Gyatso was rearrested in March 2009 and released the next month.

Chen Daojun, freelance

IMPRISONED: May 9, 2008

Police arrested Chen in Sichuan province shortly after he had been involved in a “strolling” nonviolent protest against a proposed petrochemical plant in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, according to English- and Chinese-language news reports.

In November 2008, he was found guilty of inciting subversion against the state, according to international news reports. He was sentenced to three years in prison.

Prosecutors introduced three articles by Chen to demonstrate a purportedly antigovernment stance, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center. In one piece, an article for the Hong Kong-based political magazine *Zheng Ming*, Chen portrayed antigovernment protests in Tibet in a positive light. That article, first published in April 2008, was reposted on overseas Web sites. He also published an online article objecting to the Chengdu project, but it was not among the articles cited by the prosecution.

Huang Qi, 6-4tianwang

IMPRISONED: June 10, 2008

The Web site *6-4tianwang* reported that its founder, Qi, had been forced into a car along with two friends on June 10, 2008. On June 18, news reports said police had detained him and charged him with illegally holding state secrets.

In the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008, Huang’s site reported on the shoddy construction of schools that collapsed during the quake, killing hundreds of children, and on efforts to help victims of the disaster. His arrest came shortly after the Web site reported the detention of academic Zeng Hongling, who posted critical articles about earthquake relief on overseas Web sites.

Huang was denied access to a lawyer until September 23, 2008. One of his defense lawyers, Mo Shaoping, told reporters that Huang had been questioned about earthquake-related reports and photos on the Web site immediately after his arrest, but that the state secrets charge stemmed from documents saved on his computer. He said that his client was deprived of sleep during a 24-hour interrogation session after his June arrest.

Huang pleaded not guilty in closed proceedings at Chengdu Wuhou District Court on August 5, 2009. Police arrested a defense witness to prevent him from testifying on Huang’s behalf, according to the New York-based advocacy group Human Rights in China.

He was sentenced to three years in prison during a brief hearing in November 2009. The reason for the unusually drawn-out legal proceedings was not clear. Analysts speculated that it indicated the weakness of the case against Huang and disagreement among authorities as to the severity of the punishment.

Huang's mother, Pu Wenqing, and wife, Zeng Li, has appealed for medical parole for Huang, who suffers from undisclosed ailments that began during a previous detention, according to news reports. He had spent five years in prison, from 2000 to 2005, on charges of inciting subversion in articles posted on his Web site in 2000.

Du Daobin, freelance

IMPRISONED: July 21, 2008

Police rearrested Du during an apparent crackdown on dissidents prior to the Beijing Olympics in August 2008. His defense lawyer, Mo Shaoping, told CPJ that public security officials arrested the well-known Internet writer at his workplace in Yingcheng in the province of Hubei.

Du had been serving a four-year probationary term, handed down by a court on June 11, 2004, for inciting subversion of state power in articles published on Chinese and overseas Web sites. The probationary terms included reporting monthly to authorities and obtaining permission to travel. Alleging that he had violated the conditions, police revoked Du's

probation and jailed him, according to news reports.

Mo told CPJ in October 2008 that the defense team sought to challenge the police decision, but Chinese law does not allow such appeals. Du was in Hanxi Prison in Wuhan, the provincial capital.

Kunchok Tsephel Gopey Tsang

Chomei

IMPRISONED: February 26, 2009

Public security officials arrested Kunchok Tsephel, an online writer, in Gannan, a Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the south of Gansu province, according to Tibetan rights groups. Kunchok Tsephel ran the Tibetan cultural issues Web site *Chomei*, according to the Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. Kate Saunders, U.K. communications director for the International Campaign for Tibet, told CPJ by telephone from New Delhi that she learned of his arrest from two sources.

The detention appeared to be part of a wave of arrests of writers and intellectuals in advance of the 50th anniversary of the 1959 uprising preceding the Dalai Lama's departure from Tibet in March. The 2008 anniversary had provoked ethnic rioting in Tibetan areas, and foreign reporters were barred from the region.

In November, a Gannan court sentenced Kunchok Tsephel to 15 years in prison for disclosing state secrets, according to The Associated Press.

Kunga Tsayang (Gang-Nyi)

Freelance

IMPRISONED: March 17, 2009

The Public Security Bureau arrested Kunga Tsayang during a late-night raid, according to the Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, which said it had received the information from several sources.

An environmental activist and photographer who also wrote online articles under the pen name Gang-Nyi or "Sun of Snowland," Tsayang maintained his own Web site titled *Zindriss* (Jottings) and contributed to others. He authored several essays on politics in Tibet, including "Who Is the Real Instigator of Protests?" according to New York-based advocacy group Students for a Free Tibet.

Kunga Tsayang was convicted of revealing state secrets and sentenced in November to five years in prison, according to the center. Sentencing was imposed during a closed court proceeding in the Tibetan area of Gannan, Gansu province.

Several Tibetans, including journalists, were arrested around the March 10 anniversary of the failed uprising in 1959 that prompted the Dalai Lama's departure from Tibet. Security measures were heightened in the region in the aftermath of ethnic rioting in March 2008.

Dokru Tsultrim (Zhuori Cicheng)

Freelance

IMPRISONED: April 2009

A monk at Ngaba Gomang Monastery in western Sichuan province, Dokru Tsultrim was arrested in early April for alleged antigovernment writings and articles in support of the Dalai Lama, according to the Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and the International Campaign for Tibet.

Dokru Tsultrim, originally from Qinghai province on the Tibetan plateau, also managed a private Tibetan journal, *Khawai Tsesok* (Life of Snow), which ceased publication after his arrest, the center said. "Zhuori Cicheng" is the Chinese transliteration of his name, according to Tashi Choephel Jamatsang at the center, who provided CPJ with details by e-mail.

Chinese security forces detained the monk in his room at the monastery shortly after the publication of two of his articles criticizing the Chinese government's policies in Tibet, the center said. The exact date of his arrest was unknown. Authorities had not disclosed his whereabouts or legal status by late year.

Tashi Rabten, freelance

IMPRISONED: July 26, 2009

Public security officials detained Tashi Rabten, a student at Northwest Minorities University in Lanzhou, while he was on summer break at his home in Ngaba county, Sichuan province, according to the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Asia (RFA) and international Tibetan rights groups.

Rabten edited the magazine *Shar Dzungri* (Eastern Snow Mountain) in the aftermath of ethnic rioting in Tibet in March 2008. The magazine was swiftly banned by local authorities, according to the International Campaign for Tibet. The journalist later self-published a collection of articles titled “Written in Blood,” saying in the introduction that “after an especially intense year of the usual soul-destroying events, something had to be said,” the campaign reported. The book and the magazine discussed democracy and recent anti-China protests; the book was banned after Rabten had distributed 400 copies, according to RFA.

Public security officials did not answer calls from reporters seeking information on his whereabouts or legal status.

CUBA: 22

Pedro Argüelles Morán, Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

Argüelles Morán was convicted in April 2003 of violating Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba’s National Independence and Economy, which punishes anyone who commits acts “aiming at subverting the internal order of the nation and destroying its political, economic, and social system.” He was given a 20-year prison sentence.

Argüelles Morán, a cartographer who, in 2003, was working as director

of the independent news agency Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes in the central province of Ciego de Ávila, was being held at the Canaleta Prison in his home province, his wife, Yolanda Vera Nerey, told CPJ. The 62-year-old was allowed visits every three months, she said.

Vera Nerey told CPJ that her husband was diagnosed with bone and respiratory ailments, and had cataracts in both eyes.

Victor Rolando Arroyo Carmona, Unión de Periodistas y Escritores de Cuba Independientes
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

Arroyo Carmona, a journalist for the independent news agency Unión de Periodistas y Escritores de Cuba Independientes in his home province of Pinar del Río, was handed a 26-year prison sentence for acting “against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state” under Article 91 of the penal code in April 2003.

Arroyo Carmona was being held at the Kilo 5½ Prison, his wife, Elsa González Padrón, told CPJ. The journalist, who was housed in a hall with at least 130 prisoners, waged a hunger strike in May to protest prison conditions, news reports said. Arroyo Carmona—who had been diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension, and pulmonary emphysema—protested a lack of medical attention, unsanitary cell conditions, cruel treatment, and obstruction of his efforts to practice religion.

At least three other political prisoners joined the reporter in his protest.

Miguel Galván Gutiérrez
Havana Press
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

Galván Gutiérrez, a journalist for the independent news agency Havana Press, was tried in April 2003 under Article 91 of the Cuban penal code for acting against “the independence or the territorial integrity of the state.” He was sentenced to 26 years in prison.

Galván Gutiérrez, 44, was being held in Guanajay Prison, in the western province of Havana, near his home, his sister, Teresa Galván Gutiérrez, told CPJ. Though prison conditions were harsh, she said, they were better than at the maximum-security Agüica Prison, where the journalist was imprisoned until June 2007.

Galván Gutiérrez was housed alone in a cell in which, he told his sister, he could read and study, although he said books were hard to come by. The journalist suffered severe joint and back pain, she said.

Julio César Gálvez Rodríguez
Freelance
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

Gálvez Rodríguez worked for government media for 24 years. But in March 2003, as he was working as a freelance reporter in Havana, state security agents arrested him as part of the massive crackdown. He was sum-

marily tried that April under Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba’s National Independence and Economy and given a 14-year prison sentence. The People’s Supreme Tribunal, Cuba’s highest court, upheld the decision a month later.

In 2009, Gálvez Rodríguez, 65, was being held in solitary confinement at Havana’s Combinado del Este Prison, his partner, Irene Viera Silloy, told CPJ. She said the journalist was allowed one family visit every two months. Gálvez Rodríguez suffered from high cholesterol, hypertension, and respiratory problems, according to CPJ research. Viera Silloy said he was also diagnosed with pneumonia.

Gálvez Rodríguez continued to write from prison, Viera Silloy told CPJ. She said prison authorities briefly revoked the journalist’s phone privileges in September after he refused to wear a prison uniform.

José Luis García Paneque, Libertad
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

A physician by profession, García Paneque, 43, joined the independent news agency Libertad in 1998 after being fired from his job at a hospital in eastern Las Tunas because of his political views. In April 2003, a Cuban court sentenced him to 24 years in prison after he was convicted of acting “against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state” under Article 91 of the Cuban penal code.

García Paneque was being held at Las

Mangas Prison in Granma province, according to his wife, Yamilé Llénez Labrada. Although general prison conditions improved in 2009, she said, the reporter still shared a small cell with several other inmates and complained of difficulty sleeping. García Paneque's parents visited him every 45 days, his wife told CPJ; she and her children, who moved to Texas in 2007, talked to him on the phone monthly.

García Paneque's health has significantly deteriorated in prison. He has been diagnosed with a kidney tumor, internal bleeding, chronic malnutrition, and pneumonia. Llénez Labrada told CPJ that her husband continued to have digestive problems and suffered from malnutrition.

Ricardo González Alfonso, freelance
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

González Alfonso, a poet and screenwriter, began reporting for Cuba's independent press in 1995. He founded the award-winning newsmagazine *De Cuba* and a Havana-based association of journalists, and then worked as a freelance reporter and Cuba correspondent for the Paris-based press freedom group Reporters Without Borders. He was taken into custody on March 18, 2003. In April, the Havana Provincial Tribunal found him guilty of violating Article 91 of the Cuban penal code for "acts against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state," and sentenced him to 20 years in prison. That June, the People's Supreme Tri-

bunal Court upheld his conviction.

González Alfonso, 59, was being held at Havana's Combinado del Este Prison, a two-hour car ride from his family home in the capital, his sister, Graciela González-Degard, told CPJ. The reporter's small, windowless cell, she said, was hot and humid, and the prison food was poor. As punishment for his refusal to wear a prison uniform, officials denied him religious assistance, barred his family from bringing him clean clothes, and cut family visitation to once every two months.

González-Degard, who lives in New York but visited her brother in August, told CPJ that he was in good health and spirits, though he suffered from hypertension, arthritis, severe allergies to humidity and dust, chronic bronchitis, and several digestive and circulatory problems. During her three-week visit to Havana, she was followed and harassed by state security agents, she said. She also told CPJ that González Alfonso's two teenage sons had lost employment opportunities as a result of his imprisonment.

Léster Luis González Pentón
Freelance

IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

A court in the central province of Villa Clara sentenced independent freelance reporter González Pentón in April 2003 to 20 years in prison under Article 91 of the Cuban penal code for acting against "the independence or the territorial integrity of the state."

The youngest of the imprisoned Cuban journalists, González Pentón, 32, was being held in 2009 at La Pendiente Prison in the northern city of Santa Clara, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. González Pentón suffered from stomach problems, according to Laura Pollán Toledo, a human rights activist and wife of imprisoned journalist Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez. He was allowed occasional visits to his home for good behavior, she said.

Iván Hernández Carrillo, Patria
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

Hernández Carrillo, a reporter for the independent news agency Patria in the western city of Colón, was sentenced in April 2003 to 25 years in prison under Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy. In 1992, he had been given a two-year prison sentence for allegedly "distributing enemy propaganda and disrespecting Fidel Castro."

Hernández Carrillo, 38, was being held at Guamajal Prison in Santa Clara province in 2009. He suffered from hypertension and gastritis.

On April 14, Hernández Carrillo went on a 10-day hunger strike to protest the conditions of his imprisonment, his mother, Asunción Carrillo, said. Prison authorities encouraged other inmates to harass and attack him, he told his mother.

Alfredo Pulido López, El Mayor
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

Cuban authorities arrested Pulido López, director of the independent news agency El Mayor in Camagüey, in March 2003. A month later, he was sentenced to 14 years in prison under Article 91 of the penal code, accused of acting "against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state."

In 2009, the journalist was being held at Kilo 7 Prison in his home province along with more than 100 hardened criminals, his wife, Rebecca Rodríguez Souto, told CPJ. The cell's ventilation was poor, and he shared the restroom facilities with the other inmates, she said. She told CPJ that she was able to visit him once a month and take food and medicine to him.

Pulido López, 49, suffered from chronic bronchitis, gastritis, high blood pressure, and osteoporosis. In 2009, his respiratory ailments worsened significantly from the high humidity and poor ventilation, his wife said. She told CPJ that her husband was receiving medical treatment for his respiratory condition only.

Omar Rodríguez Saludes
Nueva Prensa Cubana
IMPRISONED: March 18, 2003

Rodríguez Saludes, director of the Havana-based independent news agency Nueva Prensa Cubana, was arrested in March 2003 and summarily tried in April under Article 91 of Cuba's penal code for "acting against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state." Cuban authorities handed him a 27-year prison sentence.

Rodríguez Saludes, 44, was a well-known photographer who also reported and wrote. He was being held at Toledo Prison in Havana, where he was allowed just one visit every month, according to Laura Pollán Toledo, a human rights activist and wife of imprisoned journalist Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez.

According to his wife, Ileana Marrero Joa, the journalist had been diagnosed with gastrointestinal problems and hypertension.

Mijaíl Barzaga Lugo

Agencia Noticiosa Cubana

IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Barzaga Lugo, a reporter for the independent news agency Agencia Noticiosa Cubana, was arrested in March 2003 and accused the following month of violating Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy. Cuban authorities handed him a 15-year prison sentence.

Barzaga Lugo was being held at 1580 Prison in the municipality of San Miguel del Padrón, according to Laura Pollán Toledo, a human rights activist and wife of imprisoned journalist Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez. She said the reporter suffered from skin ailments made acute by prison conditions; he did not receive medical treatment for the problem.

Adolfo Fernández Saínz, Patria
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

In March 2003, Cuban state security

agents raided the Havana home of Fernández Saínz, correspondent for the independent news agency Patria, and then arrested the journalist. He was tried under Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy in April. In June of that year, Cuba's highest court, the People's Supreme Tribunal, upheld his conviction and his 15-year prison sentence.

Fernández Saínz, 60, was being held at Canaleta Prison in central Ciego de Ávila province, 250 miles (400 kilometers) from his home, CPJ research shows. Prison authorities allowed him family visits once every two months. His wife, Julia Núñez Pacheco, told CPJ that traveling to the prison was difficult and very expensive. A one-way bus ticket cost 85 Cuban pesos (US\$3.75), a large portion of the average Cuban monthly salary of 480 Cuban pesos (US\$21).

Conditions in Canaleta Prison were very poor, Núñez Pacheco told CPJ. Her husband was housed in a barracks with roughly 40 other inmates with little air circulation and bad hygiene. Food was inadequate and often inedible, she said. He suffered from chronic hypertension, emphysema, osteoporosis, prostate ailments, and four kidney cysts, and received scant medical attention.

Alfredo Felipe Fuentes, freelance
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Fuentes, an economist by training, began working for the Cuban inde-

pendent press in 1991. On March 19, 2003, he was arrested after a raid on his home in the city of Artemisa. The next month, the freelance reporter was convicted of violating Article 91 of the Cuban penal code, which imposes harsh penalties for acting against "the independence or the territorial integrity of the state." A judge in western Havana province handed him a 26-year prison sentence.

The 60-year-old journalist was being held at the maximum-security Guanajay Prison, his wife, Loyda Valdés González, told CPJ. Valdés González, who was allowed to visit her husband only once every 45 days, said conditions at Guanajay were better than those at other prisons where he had been held. Due to his severe back problems, the reporter did not share a cell with other prisoners. Valdés González said her husband suffered from chronic gastritis that caused him to lose significant amounts of weight.

Valdés González told CPJ that in December 2007, her husband presented an appeal to Cuba's Supreme Tribunal Court. Because Cuban authorities denied Fuentes access to a lawyer, he did so without benefit of counsel. After two years, the court had still not responded to him, Valdés González told CPJ.

Normando Hernández González
Colegio de Periodistas
Independientes de Camagüey
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Hernández González was arrested in March 2003 as part of the massive crackdown on Cuba's dissidents and independent press. The director of the news agency Colegio de Periodistas Independientes de Camagüey was sentenced the following month to 25 years in prison under Article 91 of the penal code.

Hernández González was held in an isolation cell at the maximum-security Kilo 7 Prison in his home province of Camagüey for much of the year, his mother, Blanca González, told CPJ. He spent all but two hours a week alone, and received family visits only once every 45 days, she said. The journalist was diagnosed with intestinal ailments, and has suffered from pneumonia and knee problems so severe that even standing was difficult, his mother said. In November, doctors also diagnosed Hernández González with several cardiovascular ailments.

Hernández González was moved to the hospital at Combinado del Este Prison in late October, said Oscar Espinosa Chepe, a formerly jailed journalist. His wife, Yaraí Reyes Marín, told CPJ that she requested medical parole for her husband in July 2006, but Cuban authorities did not respond.

Juan Carlos Herrera Acosta
Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Herrera Acosta was arrested during the massive crackdown on Cuba's dissidents and independent press. A Cuban court

sentenced him in April 2003 to 20 years in prison under Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy.

Herrera Acosta, Guantánamo correspondent for the independent news agency Agencia de Prensa Libre Oriental, was being held at the eastern Holguín Provincial Prison in 2009, independent Cuban journalist Miriam Leyva told CPJ. She also said that the reporter was diagnosed with diabetes. His wife, Ileana Danger Hardy, told CPJ that he suffered from psychological ailments. According to Leyva, those problems became more acute over the course of 2009.

José Ubaldo Izquierdo Hernández
Grupo de Trabajo Decoro
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Izquierdo Hernández, a reporter in western Havana for the independent news agency Grupo de Trabajo Decoro, was sentenced in April 2003 to 16 years in prison for acting "against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state" under Article 91 of the penal code. Following an appeal the next month, the People's Supreme Tribunal Court upheld his conviction. In 2009, he was being held at Guanajay Prison in his home province.

Izquierdo Hernández was diagnosed with severe depression, digestive ailments, circulatory problems, emphysema, and asthma, according to Laura Pollán Toledo, wife of fellow imprisoned journalist Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez.

Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez
Grupo de Trabajo Decoro
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Several state security agents raided Maseda Gutiérrez's home on the second day of the March 2003 crackdown on Cuba's dissidents and independent press. Following a closed-door summary trial the following month, the reporter was charged under Article 91 of the Cuban penal code for acting "against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state" and Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy and sentenced to 20 years in prison. In June of that year, Cuba's highest court, the People's Supreme Tribunal, dismissed his appeal.

An engineer with a graduate degree in nuclear physics, Maseda Gutiérrez began working as an independent journalist in 1995, according to his wife, Laura Pollán Toledo. Maseda Gutiérrez was a founding member of the independent news agency Grupo de Trabajo Decoro.

In 2009, the reporter was being held at the maximum-security Agüica Prison in western Matanzas province, Pollán Toledo said. She said Maseda Gutiérrez was allowed family visits once every 45 days. CPJ research found that he continued to report on jail conditions and human rights violations from prison. In 2008, Maseda Gutiérrez was awarded CPJ's International Press Freedom Award.

The 66-year-old reporter, the oldest

of the imprisoned Cuban journalists, suffered from high blood pressure and a skin condition, his wife said. The skin problems worsened over 2009, but Maseda Gutiérrez did not receive medical treatment, she said.

Pablo Pacheco Ávila, Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

On March 19, 2003, state security agents raided the home of Pacheco Ávila, a reporter for the local independent news agency Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes, in central Ciego de Ávila. He was convicted in April under Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's Independence and Economy for committing acts "aiming at subverting the internal order of the nation and destroying its political, economic, and social system," and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Pacheco Ávila, 39, was being held at Canaleta Prison in his home province, his wife, Oleyvis García Echemendía, told CPJ. She said her husband was in generally good health despite having been diagnosed with high blood pressure, acute gastritis, and kidney problems. He was housed in a barracks with at least 30 other prisoners.

On March 20, the sixth anniversary of Pacheco Ávila's arrest, prison authorities granted him a 24-hour home furlough for good behavior. In an interview with U.S.-based Radio Martí, Pacheco Ávila said that while at home,

he was able to see his wife and 10-year-old son, and speak by phone with other jailed reporters and family members in other parts of Cuba and abroad.

Fabio Prieto Llorente, freelance
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Prieto Llorente, a freelance reporter in western Isla de la Juventud, was arrested in March 2003 during the massive crackdown on the Cuban independent press. In April of that year, a local court sentenced him to 20 years in prison for violating Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy.

Prieto Llorente was being held in solitary confinement at El Guayabo Prison in his home province, his sister, Clara Lourdes Prieto Llorente, told CPJ. In a January 7 letter to Cuban President Raúl Castro Ruz, the reporter said his cell measured just 10 feet (three meters) by six and a half feet (two meters), and his meals consisted of spoiled and burned "animal products." According to his sister, the journalist has been diagnosed with allergies, emphysema, back problems, high blood pressure, and depression. He was allowed visits from two family members every two months, his sister told CPJ.

In 2009, Prieto Llorente actively reported on and protested prison conditions. His stories, published on overseas news Web sites, detailed such issues as the brutal punishment inflicted on other inmates by prison guards, and the "slave-like" work that

authorities imposed on prisoners. In February, he waged a hunger strike to call attention to the situation at El Guayabo, the Miami-based news Web site *Payolibre* reported.

Omar Ruiz Hernández

Grupo de Trabajo Decoro
IMPRISONED: March 19, 2003

Ruiz Hernández, a reporter for the Havana-based independent news agency Grupo de Trabajo Decoro in the province of Villa Clara, was arrested on March 19, 2003, during the massive crackdown on the island's dissidents and independent press. He was sentenced in April to 18 years in prison for acting "against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state" under Article 91 of the Cuban penal code.

The reporter, 62, was being held in Nieves Morejón Prison in the central province of Sancti Spíritus, 40 miles (65 kilometers) from his home, his wife, Bárbara Maritza Rojo Arias, told CPJ. He shared quarters with 11 prisoners in a small barracks, she said. The quarters, which he was rarely permitted to leave, had no ventilation and poor lighting. Rojo Arias said other living conditions—including his meals—improved at the prison over the course of 2009. He was allowed a family visit of two hours every two months, his wife told CPJ.

Ruiz Hernández suffered from depression and loss of eyesight. He was also diagnosed with high blood pres-

sure, circulatory problems, and chronic gastrointestinal ailments. Rojo Arias told CPJ that her husband was being treated by prison doctors and that she was allowed to provide him with additional medication.

Oscar Sánchez Madan, freelance
IMPRISONED: April 13, 2007

In early 2007, Sánchez Madan was detained twice and warned to stop working for the independent press after he covered a local corruption scandal and social problems in western Matanzas province, where he lived. He was arrested in April 2007 and, after a one-day trial, Cuban authorities convicted him of "social dangerousness," a vague charge contained in Article 72 of the penal code. The reporter was handed the maximum prison sentence of four years.

In 2009, the reporter was being held at the maximum-security Combinado del Sur Prison, outside the provincial capital of Matanzas, according to CPJ research. His neighbor, Juan Francisco Sigler, told CPJ that prison conditions were very poor. The reporter's mother was allowed to visit once every 45 days, CPJ research shows.

Sánchez Madan continued to report on human rights violations from prison, Sigler said. Prison authorities threatened retaliation, saying they would do everything in their power to keep him jailed if he continued to write, Sigler told CPJ. On at least one occasion, inmates beat the journalist severely at the encouragement of au-

thorities. As further retaliation, the reporter was sent to solitary confinement for weeks at a time, according to Sigler.

Albert Santiago Du Bouchet Hernández
Havana Press
IMPRISONED: April 18, 2009

Police arrested Du Bouchet Hernández, director of the Havana-based independent news agency Havana Press, while he was visiting relatives outside Havana. Officers alleged that the journalist was shouting antigovernment slogans in the street.

In May, Du Bouchet Hernández was convicted in a summary trial on charges of "disrespect" and distribution of enemy propaganda, and sentenced to three years in prison. Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, president of the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation in Havana, told CPJ that the journalist was not allowed a defense lawyer. Miriam Herrera, an independent journalist based in Havana, told CPJ that Du Bouchet Hernández had reported on social issues, which could have upset local authorities.

In 2005, Du Bouchet Hernández had been jailed on "disrespect" charges and sentenced to one year in prison after he enraged authorities with his coverage of the Assembly to Promote Civil Society. The two-day gathering, unprecedented in Cuba, brought together 200 opposition activists and guests in May 2005 to discuss ways to create democracy in

Cuba. Du Bouchet Hernández was released in August 2006 after completing his sentence.

EGYPT: 3

Abdel Karim Suleiman
(**Karim Amer**), freelance
IMPRISONED: November 7, 2006

Suleiman, known online as Karim Amer, was arrested on the orders of the Prosecutor General's office in the northern city of Alexandria in connection with his critical online writings. In February 2007, a criminal court in Alexandria found him guilty of insulting Islam and President Hosni Mubarak. He was sentenced to a four-year jail term, making him the first Egyptian blogger to be sentenced explicitly for his work.

Suleiman had been a student at Cairo's Al-Azhar University. He was expelled in 2006 because he frequently criticized the state-run religious university, which he accused of promoting extremist ideas, and Mubarak, whom he referred to as a dictator.

Mosad Suleiman
(**Mosad Abu Fagr**), freelance
IMPRISONED: December 26, 2007

Suleiman, known online as Mosad Abu Fagr, wrote about social and political issues affecting the Bedouin community in Sinai on his blog, *Wedna N'ish* (We Want to Live). He is also a novelist and

social activist. He was arrested at his home in Ismailiyya following demonstrations in Sinai to protest the razing of homes on Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip, according to local and international human rights reports.

Accused under the Emergency Law of such wide-ranging offenses as inciting riots and driving without a license, Suleiman was acquitted in February 2008 but not released. At least 13 judicial orders have been issued directing that the journalist be released. Because the Interior Ministry cannot violate the court orders outright, it has instead used the Emergency Law to circumvent them.

Immediately after each order of release—but before Suleiman left prison—the ministry issued a new administrative order directing his continued detention. The provisions of the Emergency Law are such that the government can use the strategy an unlimited number of times. Suleiman has waged at least one hunger strike to protest mistreatment in prison, according to the Hisham Mubarak Law Center.

Hani Nazeer Aziz, freelance
IMPRISONED: October 3, 2008

Aziz, 28, a blogger, wrote a number of pieces criticizing the state security apparatus and local religious officials. He also wrote about social, political, and Coptic minority issues. After he posted a link to a novel considered offensive to Islam, police arrested him on suspicion that he was actually the

book's anonymous author.

Although it became clear that Aziz was not the novel's author, authorities continued to hold him because of his journalism, according to his attorneys at the legal aid unit of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information. His lawyers were prevented from visiting Aziz on multiple occasions, most recently in July. Despite three judicial orders for his release, Aziz remained in custody in late year under the country's Emergency Law. His lawyers said he was mistreated in prison and was pressured to convert to Islam. All of the material on Aziz's blog was deleted by an unidentified party.

ERITREA: 19

Zemenfes Haile, *Tsigenay*
IMPRISONED: January 1999

The founder and manager of the now-defunct private weekly *Tsigenay*, Haile was arrested on charges of failing to complete his national service. He was last seen by friends and relatives in the Zara labor camp in Eritrea's lowland desert in 2000.

CPJ sources said Haile was released from prison in 2002 but was assigned to extended military service. His continued deprivation of liberty was part of the government's crackdown on the press, which began in September 2001.

Ghebrehiwet Keleta, *Tsigenay*
IMPRISONED: July 2000

Security agents arrested Keleta, a reporter for the private weekly *Tsigenay*, while he was on his way to work in July 2000. He has not been heard from since. Sources told CPJ at the time that the reporter was being held in connection with the government's overall crackdown on the press.

Said Abdelkader, *Admas*
Yusuf Mohamed Ali, *Tsigenay*
Amanuel Asrat, *Zemen*
Temesken Ghebreyesus, *Keste Debena*
Mattewos Habteab, *Meqaleh*
Dawit Habtemichael, *Meqaleh*
Medhanie Haile, *Keste Debena*
Dawit Isaac, *Setit*
Seyoum Tsehaye, freelance
IMPRISONED: September 2001

Eritrean security forces jailed at least 10 local journalists without trial in the days following September 18, 2001. The arrests took place less than a week after authorities effectively shut down the country's fledgling private press.

Authorities accused the journalists of avoiding the country's compulsory military service, threatening national security, and failing to observe licensing requirements. CPJ research indicates that the crackdown was part of a government drive to crush political dissent ahead of elections scheduled for December 2001, which were subsequently canceled. The private press had reported on divisions within the ruling party, the Eritrean People's Defense Force, and had criticized the increasingly authoritarian nature of

President Isaias Afwerki's regime.

The journalists were initially held incommunicado at a police station in Asmara, where they began a hunger strike on March 31, 2002, and smuggled a message out of jail demanding due process. The government responded by transferring them to secret locations and has since refused to divulge their health, whereabouts, or legal status. Several CPJ sources said that most of the journalists were being held in a secret prison camp called Eirairo, near the village of Gahtelay.

Among the group of 10 journalists initially arrested, CPJ has confirmed one death. Several CPJ sources said publisher and editor Fesshayé "Joshua" Yohannes, 47, died in a prison outside Asmara on January 11, 2007, after a long illness. Yohannes had received CPJ's International Press Freedom Award in 2002.

In at least three other cases, it was not clear whether the journalists were still alive. Unconfirmed online reports said that Yusuf Mohamed Ali, Medhanie Haile, and Said Abdelkader had died in prison. CPJ continues to investigate the status of the three journalists. It lists them on the 2009 prison census as a means of holding the government responsible for their fates.

The government has ignored numerous inquiries from CPJ and other organizations seeking information about the health, whereabouts, or legal status of all of the imprisoned journalists. In the rare cases that the government has responded, its spokesmen have offered

alarming blanket denials about the imprisonments. In a 2006 interview with CPJ, presidential spokesman Yemane Gebremeskel denied that the journalists were imprisoned because of what they had written, saying only that they “were involved in acts against the national interest of the state.”

In November 2009, a government spokesman went a step further, denying entirely that journalists were being held by the government. “I am not aware of any imprisoned journalists in our country,” asserted Emmanuel Hadgo, a spokesman for the Ministry of Information.

The case of *Setit* co-owner Isaac, an Eritrean with Swedish citizenship, has drawn considerable attention in Sweden, where diplomats, journalists, and grassroots activists campaigned for his release. Isaac was briefly released for a medical checkup on November 19, 2005, and allowed to phone his family and a friend in Sweden. Despite hopes that he would be freed, he was returned to jail two days later with no explanation, according to his colleagues and relatives. In March 2007, Sweden’s National Press Club awarded him its Freedom of Expression and Press Prize.

Saleh Aljezeeri, Eritrean State Radio
Hamid Mohammed Said, Eri-TV
IMPRISONED: February 15, 2002

During a July 2002 fact-finding mission to the capital, Asmara, CPJ delegates confirmed that Eritrean authorities had arrested three state reporters in

February 2002 as part of the government’s mass crackdown on the press, which began in September 2001.

A reporter with the network’s Arabic-language service, Saadia Ahmed, was eventually released in early 2005, according to CPJ sources. Eri-TV reporter Said and Eritrean State Radio reporter Aljezeeri remained imprisoned in an undisclosed location, according to local journalists.

Ghirmai Abraham, Radio Bana
Issak Abraham, Radio Bana
Yirgalem Fesseha, Radio Bana
Bereket Misguina, Radio Bana
Meles Nguse, Radio Bana
Mulubruhan Weldegebriel
Radio Bana
IMPRISONED: January
and February 2009

Eritrean security forces arrested six government journalists as part of a crackdown on staffers connected to Radio Bana, an Education Ministry-sponsored station in Asmara, according to several CPJ sources. Authorities ordered the arrests based on suspicions that the journalists and other staffers had provided information to foreign-based Eritrean opposition organizations and news Web sites, according to the sources.

The journalists were being held in Mai Srwa and Adi Abieto military camps. Other non-journalist staffers were also being held in late year.

The journalists had worked for other state media. Ghirmai Abraham had been producer of an arts program, and

Issak Abraham had produced a Sunday entertainment show on state Radio Dimtsi Hafash. Misguina (also a film director and scriptwriter), Nguse (also a poet), and Fesseha (a poet as well) were columnists for the state-run daily *Hadas Eritrea*. Weldegebriel was the author of a column on celebrities for *Hadas Eritrea*.

ETHIOPIA: 4

Saleh Idris Gama, Eri-TV
Tesfalidet Kidane Tesfazghi, Eri-TV
IMPRISONED: December 2006

Since disclosing that they had Gama and Tesfazghi in custody in April 2007, the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry repeatedly declined to provide information about the whereabouts, legal status, or health of the two Eritrean state television journalists whom the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry said were among 41 people “captured” in Somalia on suspicion of terrorism.

Tesfazghi, a producer, and Gama, a cameraman, were picked up by the Kenyan authorities after the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia and then handed over to the Ethiopian-backed Somali transitional government in January 2007, according to the Eritrean Foreign Ministry.

In a video aired on state television, the Ethiopian government suggested the journalists were involved in military activities in Somalia. While Eritrean journalists were often conscript-

ed into military service, the video did not present any evidence linking the journalists to military activity. A Foreign Ministry statement said some detainees would be tried “before the competent military court” but did not identify them by name.

Government spokesman Bereket Simon told CPJ in August 2008 that court proceedings were pending, but declined to provide details. In October 2009, Ethiopian Foreign Ministry spokesman Wahde Belay told CPJ that he had no information about the two journalists.

Ibrahim Mohamed Ali, *Salafiyya*
Asrat Wedajo, *Seife Nebelbal*
IMPRISONED: August 24, 2009

Federal High Court Judge Zewdinesh Asres convicted Ali and Wedajo on criminal code and press law charges in connection with their coverage of sensitive topics dating back a number of years, according to local journalists. She sentenced them each to one year in prison.

Ali, editor of the weekly Muslim-oriented newspaper *Salafiyya*, was convicted in connection with a piece written by a guest columnist and published in 2007 that criticized the Ministry of Education’s proposal to restrict headscarves for female Muslim students at public educational institutions, according to defense lawyer Temam Ababulgu.

Wedajo, former editor of *Seife Nebelbal*, a now-defunct weekly that was banned amid the 2005 government

crackdown on the press, was convicted in connection with a 2004 story alleging human rights violations against the ethnic Oromos, the largest ethnic group in the country, according to local journalists.

Ali and Wedajo were being held at Kality Prison, outside the capital, Addis Ababa, pending appeals in their case. The Ethiopian government has had a longstanding practice of reviving years-old criminal cases, some of them seemingly dormant, as a way to silence critical journalists.

GAMBIA: 1

“Chief” Ebrima Manneh*Daily Observer*

IMPRISONED: July 7, 2006

Manneh, a journalist for the state-controlled *Daily Observer*, was arrested after he tried to publish a BBC report critical of President Yahya Jammeh. His colleagues witnessed his arrest by two plainclothes officers of the National Intelligence Agency on the premises of the *Daily Observer*.

Demba Jawo, a former president of the Gambian Press Union, said Manneh may have been further targeted for his reporting of the 2005 killing of Ghanaian immigrants in the Gambia.

Gambian security agencies and police have consistently refused to provide information on the journalist's whereabouts, health, or legal status.

Manneh has been seen but a few

times since his arrest. A fellow journalist reported seeing him on the grounds of Fatoto Prison in late 2006. The next year, witnesses told the Ghana-based press freedom group Media Foundation of West Africa that Manneh was being treated for high blood pressure at the Royal Victorian Teaching Hospital in Banjul.

The case has galvanized a variety of forces to pressure the Gambian government. In November, the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined that Manneh's imprisonment was unlawful under international law and called on the Gambian government to release him immediately. In April, U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin led a group of six colleagues in calling for Manneh's release. And in 2008, the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States ordered the Gambian government to release Manneh and compensate his family for an illegal detention.

INDIA: 1

Laxman Chaudhury, Sambad

IMPRISONED: September 20, 2009

Police arrested Chaudhury, a correspondent for the Oriya-language *Sambad* daily, in Mohana, a southern area of eastern Orissa state, for alleged involvement with antigovernment Maoist groups, according to local news reports. His detention was based on a packet of Maoist literature addressed to the jour-

nalist and found in the possession of a bus conductor who was arrested the same day, the reports said. Chaudhury denied any knowledge of the packet or having any connection with Maoists.

Chaudhury, 40, was denied bail by two lower courts and charged with criminal conspiracy and sedition, local news reports said. Sedition, which includes inciting hatred against the government through the written word, carries a possible life term, according to the *Indian Express*.

More than 100 local journalists staged protests the day after the arrest and petitioned local authorities for Chaudhury's release, news reports said. Maoists, also known as Naxalites, frequently pass materials to journalists in the state as part of their insurgency campaign, reporters said.

Colleagues accused local police of arresting Chaudhury in reprisal for his articles connecting a local police chief to the drug trade, according to news reports. Chaudhury said police made him sign blank papers as part of a “confession,” the *Indian Express* reported, citing the journalist's wife, Minati. A petition for bail was before an Orissa court in late year, news reports said.

IRAN: 23

Adnan Hassanpour, Aso

IMPRISONED: January 25, 2007

Security agents seized Hassanpour, a journalist and former editor for the

now-defunct Kurdish-Persian weekly *Aso*, in his hometown of Marivan, in Kurdistan province, according to news reports.

A Revolutionary Court convicted Hassanpour in July 2007 of endangering national security and engaging in propaganda against the state, one of his attorneys, Sirvan Hosmandi, told CPJ. The journalist was sentenced to death. A court of appeals overturned the death sentence in September 2008 and ordered a new trial on charges of “working for outlawed parties” and espionage, according to the BBC. In November, a trial court convicted Hassanpour on the new charges and reimposed the death sentence, the BBC said.

Mohammad Seddigh Kaboudvand*Payam-e Mardom*

IMPRISONED: July 1, 2007

Plainclothes security officials arrested journalist and human rights activist Kaboudvand at his Tehran office, according to Amnesty International and CPJ sources. He was being held at Evin Prison in Tehran.

Authorities accused Kaboudvand, head of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan and managing editor of the weekly *Payam-e Mardom*, of acting against national security and engaging in propaganda against the state, according to his organization's Web site. A Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced him to 11 years in prison.

Mojtaba Lotfi, freelance

IMPRISONED: October 8, 2008

A clergyman and a blogger, Lotfi was arrested by security forces on a warrant issued by the religious Clergy Court in Qom. Authorities accused him of publishing the views of Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, who had criticized President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's positions.

Authorities did not specify particular articles or publications in which the views were supposedly cited. Lotfi was convicted of several charges, including spreading antistate information, and sentenced to four years in prison, according to news reports.

Hossein Derakhshan, freelance

IMPRISONED: November 2008

On December 30, 2008, a spokesman for the Iranian Judiciary confirmed in a press conference in Tehran that Derakhshan, a well-known Iranian-Canadian blogger, had been detained since November 2008 in connection with comments he allegedly made about a key cleric, according to local and international news reports.

The exact date of Derakhshan's arrest was unknown, but news of his detention first appeared on November 17, 2008, on *Jahan News*, a news Web site close to the Iranian intelligence apparatus. At the time, *Jahan News* reported that he had confessed to "spying for Israel" during the preliminary interrogation.

Derakhshan started blogging after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. A former writer for reformist newspapers, he also contributed opinion pieces to *The Guardian* of London and *The New York Times*. The journalist, who lived in Canada during most of this decade, returned to Tehran a few weeks prior to his detention, *The Washington Post* reported.

In November, the BBC Persian service reported that Derakhshan's family had sought information about his whereabouts and the charges he faced and expressed concern about having very limited contact with him.

Mahdi Hossein-Zadeh*Hambastegy*

IMPRISONED: June 2009

Hossein-Zadeh, a journalist for the economic section of the reformist newspaper *Hambastegy*, was arrested in mid-June, according to *Mouj Azadi*, a reformist news Web site.

Hossein-Zadeh was being held at Tehran's Evin Prison, where his family had been allowed two visits, the site reported. He is the former editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Tawsu'a* and also worked for *Etemad e Melli*, the newspaper owned by defeated presidential candidate Mahdi Karroubi. He faced espionage allegations in late year, according to *Mowjcamp*, a news Web site supportive of the defeated presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

Ahmad Zaid-Abadi, freelance

IMPRISONED: June 2009

Zaid-Abadi, who wrote a weekly column for *Rooh Online*, a Farsi- and English-language reformist news Web site, was arrested in Tehran, according to news reports. Zaid-Abadi is also the director of the Organization of University Alumni of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a supporter of defeated presidential candidate Mahdi Karroubi.

Mahdieh Mohammadi, Zaid-Abadi's wife, was allowed to see the journalist after he had spent 53 days in custody, according to the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle. He told her that he was being held in inhumane conditions.

Zaid-Abadi was among more than 100 opposition figures and journalists who faced a mass, televised judicial proceeding in August on vague antistate accusations, according to local and international news reports. In November, he was sentenced to six years in prison, five years of exile in Gonabad, Razavi Khorasan province, and a lifetime deprivation of social and political activities, according to the Committee of Human Rights Reporters.

Omid Salimi, *Nesf e Jehan*

IMPRISONED: June 14, 2009

Salimi, a photographer who worked for *Nesf e Jehan* newspaper in Esfahan, was arrested after being summoned by

Revolutionary Guards to pick up belongings confiscated during an earlier arrest, according to Human Rights and Democracy Activists in Iran, a local human rights watchdog. Salimi had been detained in December 2008 and had spent three months in prison on unspecified charges.

After his most recent arrest, Salimi was transferred to Evin Prison in Tehran, according to the Iranian Human Rights Activists New Agency. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

Kayvan Samimi, *Nameh*

IMPRISONED: June 14, 2009

Samimi, manager of the now-defunct monthly *Nameh*, was being held in Evin Prison after his arrest in Tehran, according to news reports.

His lawyer, Nasrin Sotoodeh, said in mid-October that authorities refused a request to see the case file, according to *Mowjcamp*, a news Web site supportive of the reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi. Samimi called his family in October to tell them that he was under pressure to make a false confession, his lawyer told *Rooh Online*.

Samimi was charged with "creating public anxiety" and "congregation and mutiny to disrupt national security," his lawyer told *Zamaneh Radio*. The first session of his trial was held on November 23, but no verdict was immediately announced, according to news accounts.

Saeed Laylaz, *Sarmayeh*
IMPRISONED: June 17, 2009

Laylaz, editor of the daily business journal *Sarmayeh* and a vocal critic of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's economic policies, was arrested at home on June 17, his wife, Sepharnaz Panahi, told the BBC Persian service. She said that officers searched their home and confiscated videotapes, hard drives, and letters.

Laylaz was among more than 100 opposition figures and journalists who faced a mass, televised judicial proceeding in August on vague anti-state accusations, according to local and international news reports. He spent 100 days in solitary confinement at Tehran's Evin Prison before being moved to a group cell, where he was denied newspapers, pen, and paper, his wife told the Committee of Human Rights Reporters.

Laylaz was charged with "congregation and mutiny against national security, propagation against the regime, disrupting public order, and keeping classified documents," according to *Mowjcamp*, a news Web site supportive of the defeated presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

After a two-hour trial in November, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison, according to the Human Rights Activists News Agency and online accounts. His wife told the news Web site *Kalameh* that the "classified document" that was a centerpiece of the prosecution was actually a published

and widely available investigation into the Iranian judiciary.

Bahman Ahmadi Amouee
Freelance
IMPRISONED: June 19, 2009

Amouee, a contributor to several reformist newspapers including *Mihan*, *Hamshahri*, *Jame'e*, *Khordad*, *Norooz*, and *Sharq*, and the author of an eponymous blog, was arrested with his wife, Zhila Bani-Yaghoub, according to news reports. Bani-Yaghoub, editor-in-chief of the *Iranian Women's Club*, a news Web site focusing on women's rights, was released on bail on August 19, according to the BBC Persian service.

Amouee was being held in Tehran's Evin Prison, part of the time in solitary confinement, according to news reports. Farideh Ghayrat, his lawyer, told the *Gooya* news Web site that her client was arrested without a warrant and that no charges had been filed against him. His wife said Amouee was denied access to his family and lawyer for several weeks, according to *Mowjcamp*, a news Web site supportive of the reformist candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

Issa Sahar-Khiz, freelance
IMPRISONED: July 3, 2009

Sahar-Khiz, a columnist for the reformist news Web sites *Rooz Online* and *Norooz* and a founding member of the Association of Iranian Journalists, was arrested while traveling in northern Iran, the association said in

a statement.

His son, Mahdi, told the news Web site *Rooz Online* in mid-September that the family had met with the journalist in the presence of prison officials. Sahar-Khiz told family members that he had access to television and was allowed to walk outside his cell for exercise. Sahar-Khiz's lawyer said that his client was being charged with "participation in riots," "encouraging others to participate in riots," and "insulting the supreme leader," according to *Rooz Online*.

Sahar-Khiz has had a long career in journalism. He worked for 15 years for IRNA, Iran's official news agency, and ran its New York office for part of that time. He returned to Iran in 1997 to work in Mohammad Khatami's Ministry of Islamic Guidance, in charge of domestic publications. Sahar-Khiz and a superior, Ahmad Bouraghani, came to be known as the architects of a period of relative freedom for the press in Iran. After he was forced to leave the ministry and was banned from government service in a trial, he founded a reformist newspaper, *Akhbar-e Eghtesad*, and monthly magazine, *Aftab*, both of which were eventually banned. Sahar-Khiz wrote articles directly critical of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader.

Massoud Bastani
Farhikhtegan and *Jomhoriyat*
IMPRISONED: July 5, 2009

Bastani, a journalist for the reformist newspaper *Farhikhtegan* and *Jomhori-*

yat, a news Web site affiliated with the defeated presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, was arrested when he went to a Tehran court seeking information about his wife, journalist Mehsa Amrabadi, according to local news reports. Amrabadi, arrested along with two other journalists on June 15, was released on August 25.

Bastani was among more than 100 opposition figures and journalists who faced a mass, televised judicial proceeding in August on vague anti-state accusations, according to news reports. In September, his lawyer, Mohammad Sharrif, told the *Amir Kabir Newsletter* Web site that Bastani had spent weeks in solitary confinement.

On October 20, the news site *Norooz* reported that a court had sentenced Bastani to six years in prison for "propagating against the regime and congregating and mutinying to create anarchy."

Bastani had been editor-in-chief of the now-banned *Neda-ye Eslahat* (Voice of Reform) weekly.

Marjan Abdollahian, *Hamshahri*
IMPRISONED: July 9, 2009

The BBC Persian service and other news outlets reported that authorities had detained Abdollahian, a photo editor for the Tehran-based *Hamshahri* newspaper. Six days after her arrest, she called her family to inform them that she was being held in Evin Prison, according to the news Web site *Rooz Online*. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

Saeed Matin-Pour*Yar Pag* and *Mouj Bidari*

IMPRISONED: July 12, 2009

A Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted Matin-Pour of having “relations with foreigners and propagating against the regime,” according to local news reports. He was sentenced to an eight-year prison term.

Matin-Pour was first arrested in May 2007 and released on bail. He was rearrested in 2009 amid the government’s crackdown on the press. The journalist worked for *Yar Pag* and *Mouj Bidari* newspapers in western Azerbaijan province, in addition to writing his own blog, according to local news reports. Matin-Pour was suffering from heart and respiratory problems, and his family was not immediately able to secure a medical release for examination outside prison, according to the news Web site *Advarnews*.

Fariba Pajooch, freelance

IMPRISONED: August 2009

Pajooch was arrested in mid-August, according to the Iran Human Rights Center. On September 7, she contacted her family to tell them she was being held at Evin Prison in Tehran, the organization reported.

Pajooch worked for reformist news outlets such as *Etemad e Melli* and the Iranian Labor News Agency, and for the Persian service of Radio France Internationale (RFI) and Spain’s *El País*. The Human Rights Activists News Agency,

a local watchdog, reported on October 12 that the journalist had been under constant interrogation for weeks. RFI reported that she was charged with “propagating against the regime” and had been pressured to make a false confession.

Reza Nourbakhsh, *Farhikhtegan*

IMPRISONED: August 4, 2009

Authorities took Nourbakhsh, editor-in-chief of the reformist newspaper *Farhikhtegan*, into custody after searching his home, according to news reports. Nourbakhsh also contributed to *Jomhoriyat*, a news Web site supportive of the defeated presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

Nourbakhsh was among more than 100 opposition figures and journalists who faced a mass, televised judicial proceeding in August on vague anti-state accusations, according to news reports. He was sentenced to six years in prison on November 3, although the exact charges against him were not immediately disclosed.

Mohammad Davari, *Saham News*

IMPRISONED: September 5, 2009

Saham News, a Web site affiliated with presidential candidate Mahdi Karroubi, reported that its editor-in-chief, Davari, had been detained. Seventeen days after his arrest, the journalist was allowed to contact his family, according to the *Tahavolkhani* news Web site. His mother said he was being held at Tehran’s Evin Prison.

Davari was brought to trial on November 22 on charges of propagation against the regime, congregation and mutiny for disrupting national security, and creating chaos in public order.

In the weeks after the election, Davari had videotaped the testimony of inmates at Kahrizak Detention Center who alleged they had been raped and abused while in custody, according to the *Free Iranian Journalists* blog.

Negar Sayeh, freelance

IMPRISONED: October 2009

Sayeh, a freelance journalist and author of the blog *Shahr e Saye*, was arrested in October, according to *Norooz*, a news Web site affiliated with reformist presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi. Sayeh had previously worked as a reporter for Iranian state radio and television.

Sayeh’s arrest came after her husband, Saeed Ghoreishi, was arrested along with dozens of people at a gathering to express solidarity with an imprisoned reformist, *Norooz* reported. He was released on November 24. No formal charges against Sayeh had been disclosed by late year.

Sayeh’s blog entries were deleted. Her mother told the Committee of Human Rights Reporters that she met with prosecutors to object to the detention and the lack of information about the case. They said her daughter “had a personal blog where she wrote critical statements against authorities,” the committee said.

Javad Mahzadeh, freelance

IMPRISONED: October 22, 2009

Mahzadeh, a journalist and novelist, was arrested on his way to work, on the orders of the Revolutionary Court’s prosecutor’s office, according to local news reports.

Mahzadeh, a political analyst and a literary critic who wrote for the Web sites *Iranian Diplomacy* and *Baran*, was well-known in Iran for the novel, *Take Away Your Laughter*. Authorities confiscated a computer from his home, according to news reports. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

Mazdak Ali Nazari, *Nasim Haraz**Monthly* and *Journalism for Peace*

IMPRISONED: November 2009

Nazari, who won the Iranian Journalists Association’s Best Journalist Award in 2007, was arrested at his home sometime in the second week of November, according to news accounts and human rights groups.

Nazari was editor of *Nasim Haraz Monthly*, a cultural magazine, and editor-in-chief of *Journalism for Peace*, a critical Web site focusing on human rights. He is also author of the blog *Zemzemeh Haje Divaneh*. Nazari told his family about his arrest in a brief telephone call, but was unable to relay details, including his whereabouts, according to *Rooz Online*, a Farsi- and English-language reformist news Web site.

Nazari had also worked for *Etemad*

e Melli, the newspaper owned by defeated presidential candidate Mahdi Karroubi.

Nafiseh Zare Kohan, freelance
IMPRISONED: November 4, 2009

Kohan wrote political commentary on her blog *Roozmaregiha* and contributed articles to *Rooz Online*, a Farsi- and English-language reformist news Web site. She was arrested along with her husband, Hojjat Sharifi, an activist with a university student association.

After her original blog, *Roozmaregiha*, was blocked by the government, she started a new one, *Roozmaregiha2*, in 2008.

Kohan and her husband were transferred to an undisclosed facility. She was allowed to contact her sister once for a few minutes, according to the reformist news Web site *Mowj-e Sabz*. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

Hasan Asadi Zeidabadi, freelance
IMPRISONED: November 4, 2009

Zeidabadi contributed political commentary to *Rooz Online*, *Etemad e Melli*, and other reformist publications. The news Web site *Bamdad Khabar* reported that his wife was allowed to visit him briefly at Evin Prison in mid-November. He told his wife he was being kept in solitary confinement. She said he had been charged, but she could not disclose the details.

Zeidabadi is also a member of Advar Tahkim Vahdat, a politically active alumni organization that has been vocal in condemning recent government actions.

Sassan Aghaee, freelance
IMPRISONED: November 22, 2009

Security forces raided the home of Aghaee, a seasoned journalist who contributed to a number of newspapers, including *Farhikhtegan*, *Etemad*, *Tose'eh*, *Mardom Salari*, and *Etemad e Melli*. He was also author of the blog *Free Tribune*.

Aghaee was being held at Evin Prison, according to news accounts. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year. In a letter the journalist asked to be opened in case of his arrest, Aghaee said any confessions he might make in custody should be disregarded as coerced, according to the reformist Web site *Jaras*.

IRAQ (in U.S. custody): 1

Ibrahim Jassam, freelance
IMPRISONED: September 2, 2008

Jassam, a freelance photographer working for Reuters, was detained by U.S. and Iraqi forces during a raid on his home in Mahmoodiya, south of Baghdad, Reuters reported. At the time of the arrest, a U.S. military spokesman told CPJ that the journalist was deemed "a threat to the secu-

urity of Iraq and coalition forces."

In November 2008, the Iraqi Central Criminal Court ruled that there was no evidence to hold Jassam and ordered the U.S. military to release him, Reuters reported. U.S. military authorities rejected the court order, saying that he "continued to pose a serious threat to the security and stability of Iraq."

The military has disclosed no evidence against Jassam, and he has never been charged with a crime.

U.S. troops have detained dozens of journalists—mostly Iraqis—since the war in Iraq began in March 2003, CPJ research found. In at least 13 cases, journalists were held for prolonged periods without charge or due process. In all other cases, the journalists were freed without charges ever being substantiated.

KAZAKHSTAN: 1

Ramazan Yesergepov, *Alma-Ata Info*
IMPRISONED: January 7, 2009

Kazakh security service (KNB) agents seized Yesergepov from a hospital bed in Almaty in early January, and placed him in detention in the southern city of Taraz on charges of disclosing state secrets. Yesergepov, editor of *Alma-Ata Info*, had published two internal KNB memos alongside an article alleging that the regional KNB tried to influence a prosecutor and judge in a criminal tax evasion case.

The KNB classified his case as a state secret, which meant his family and colleagues could not access the case file or attend hearings, according to Rozlana Taukina, head of the Almaty-based Journalists in Danger Foundation. The lawyer who initially defended Yesergepov resigned from the case in June without explanation and left Kazakhstan, Taukina told CPJ.

In August, a Taraz City Court judge sentenced Yesergepov to three years in prison on the charge of "collection of classified information." Raushan Yesergepova, the journalist's wife, told the Kazakh service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that a state-appointed defense lawyer did not attend Yesergepov's final hearing, and that armed police officers prevented her and her husband's supporters from entering the court.

On October 22, a regional court in Taraz rejected Yesergepov's appeal, according to local news reports.

MAURITANIA: 1

Hanevy Ould Dehah, *Taqadoumy*
IMPRISONED: June 18, 2009

Ould Dehah, founder and manager of *Taqadoumy*, an independent news Web site, was arrested in connection with a defamation complaint filed by Ibrahima Moctar Sarr, head of the Alliance for Justice and Democracy/Movement for Renewal, an opposition party, according to local news reports.

Sarr alleged that Ould Dehah had falsely accused him of purchasing a villa with money from the military junta, *Taqadoumy* reported. A Nouakchott court sentenced the journalist on August 19 to six months in jail for breaching public decency, according to local news reports, but acquitted him of the defamation charges.

Authorities had targeted *Taqadoumy* on other occasions for its critical reporting. The Web site was temporarily blocked in March, and its journalists were frequently detained by authorities, CPJ research found.

MOROCCO: 1

Driss Chahtan, *Al-Michael*
IMPRISONED: October 15, 2009

A Rabat court sentenced Chahtan, managing editor of the independent weekly *Al-Michael*, to a year in jail for “publishing false information” about the health of King Mohammed VI during a period when the monarch had not been seen in public, local journalists told CPJ. Police took the journalist into custody immediately after the ruling.

The court also sentenced *Al-Michael* reporters Mostafa Hiran and Rashid Mahameed to three months in prison in connection with the September articles, but they were not immediately taken into custody. Defense attorneys told CPJ that the trial did not meet basic fairness standards, notably in the

court’s refusal to allow the defense to summon witnesses.

RUSSIA: 1

Boris Stomakhin, *Radikalnaya Politika*
IMPRISONED: March 22, 2006

Stomakhin, editor of the small-circulation monthly newspaper *Radikalnaya Politika* (Radical Politics), was imprisoned on March 22, 2006, on charges of inciting ethnic hatred and making public calls to extremist activity. The Butyrsky District Court of Moscow sentenced him to five years behind bars that November. The journalist, his family, and his defense team said his imprisonment was in retaliation for his sharp criticism of the Kremlin’s policies in the southern republic of Chechnya.

In her ruling, Judge Lyubov Ishmuratova said Stomakhin’s articles “approved Chechen terrorists’ criminal actions aimed at the annihilation of the Russian people as an ethnicity.” The ruling quoted him as writing: “Let tens of new Chechen snipers take their positions in the mountain ridges and the city ruins and let hundreds, thousands of aggressors fall under righteous bullets! No mercy! Death to the Russian occupiers! ... The Chechens have the full moral right to bomb everything they want in Russia.”

Stomakhin, who had pleaded not guilty, said he was “tried for his views

and not for any real crime. ... In the articles, I expressed my opinion, with which people were free to agree or disagree,” the news agency RIA-Novosti reported. He said an opinion was not a “call to action.”

Police arrested Stomakhin in March 2006, a day after he fell from the window of his fourth-floor Moscow apartment while trying to elude police, according to local press reports. He broke both his legs and suffered a back injury.

In May 2007, the Moscow City Court reviewed Stomakhin’s appeal for early release but left the verdict unchanged, the independent Caucasus news site *Kavkazsky Uzel* reported.

Stomakhin was later transferred to a prison colony in the village of Burepolom, Nizhny Novgorod region.

In February 2008, the Tonsheevsky Regional Court denied an appeal for Stomakhin’s early release, the Moscow-based nonprofit group For Human Rights told *Kavkazsky Uzel*. Representatives of the group met with him briefly and told the press they were concerned about the journalist’s health; the fall from the window in 2006 left him with a permanent limp and spinal cord damage.

Two other appeals for early release, made in 2009, were also denied.

SAUDI ARABIA: 1

Raafat al-Ghanim, freelance
IMPRISONED: July 29, 2009

Security agents arrested al-Ghanim, a Syrian blogger living in Saudi Arabia who wrote about social and political issues in both countries, according to the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information.

Before his arrest, al-Ghanim had signed a petition calling for the release of two activists who were arrested after announcing their intention to attend a sit-in protest in solidarity with Palestinians, according to the network. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year, and al-Ghanim’s whereabouts were unknown.

SRI LANKA : 1

**J.S. Tissainayagam, *OutreachSL*,
North Eastern Monthly,
and *Sunday Times***
IMPRISONED: March 7, 2008

Terrorist Investigation Division forces arrested well-known Tamil columnist and editor J.S. Tissainayagam when he tried to visit detained colleagues Vettivel Jasikaran and Vadivel Valamathy. Jasikaran and Valamathy were released after 19 months in detention.

Tissainayagam was editor of the news Web site *OutreachSL* at the time of his arrest. He was also a columnist for the *Sunday Times* and had once edited a Tamil-viewpoint magazine known as *North Eastern Monthly*.

On August 25, 2008, the Colombo High Court indicted Tissainayagam on terrorism charges stemming from

articles published in 2006 in *North Eastern Monthly*, according to defense lawyer M.A. Sumanthiran. The court said the articles, which detailed displacement of residents and other humanitarian issues in eastern Sri Lanka, incited communal disharmony in violation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Tissainayagam told his lawyer he had written a confession after being forced to watch several brutal interrogations, including one involving Jasikaran.

The magazine, which folded in early 2007, was published by Jasikaran's printing business. In a statement posted on its official Web site, the Peace Secretariat said the journalist and "his business associates" had produced publications "designed to embarrass the Sri Lankan government through false accusations."

On August 31, 2009, the court convicted Tissainayagam and sentenced him to 20 years of hard labor. The same day, CPJ announced that the editor would receive its International Press Freedom Award in November.

Prior to his arrest, Tissainayagam had written several opinion pieces for the *Sunday Times*, many of which were highly critical of the Sri Lankan government's handling of security issues. One of the final columns before his arrest was titled, "Child Soldiers: What the Govt. Report Did Not Report."

During his World Press Freedom Day address in May, U.S. President Barack Obama said Tissainayagam's case was "emblematic" of the situation

of journalists being wrongly jailed around the world.

SYRIA: 1

Karim al-Arbaji, freelance
IMPRISONED: June 7, 2007

Al-Arbaji, administrator of the online forum *Akhawia*, languished in prison until September 2009, when he was finally sentenced to three years in prison by a State Security Court for "spreading false news that weakened the national sentiment," in accordance with Article 286 of the penal code, according to news reports.

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information said al-Arbaji's alleged confessions were extracted under torture and other forms of duress. The Syrian Center for Media and Free Expression described the case against him as baseless.

TUNISIA: 2

Zuhair Makhoulf, freelance
IMPRISONED: October 20, 2009

Makhoulf, a contributor to the Tunisian news Web site *Assabil Online*, was arrested after writing an article about pollution in the industrial areas of Nabeul, according to local human rights groups.

He was charged with "harming and disturbing others through the public

communication network" and placed at Al-Mornaguia Prison, in the southern suburbs of Tunis. His case was pending in late year.

Taoufik Ben Brik, freelance
IMPRISONED: October 29, 2009

Ben Brik, a contributor to several European media outlets and one of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's top critics, was sentenced November 26 to six months in prison on trumped-up charges of assault, property damage, defamation, and violating public morality, according to CPJ interviews and news reports.

Ben Brik was not brought to the Tunis court when the ruling was issued, according to his wife, Azza Zarrad. His lawyers and family were prevented from visiting him for several days before the court hearing, she said. His lawyers said they would appeal.

Ben Brik was arrested just days after Ben Ali threatened to prosecute Tunisians who "cast doubt" on the results of the October general election. Ben Ali won a fifth term and the ruling Democratic Constitutional Rally won an overwhelming legislative majority in the balloting, which was marred by widespread media suppression.

In 2000, Ben Brik was charged with spreading false information and defaming public institutions in articles published in European media outlets. The charges were dropped after he went on a widely publicized hunger strike to protest judicial and police harassment.

TURKEY: 1

Aylin Duruoglu, *Vatan*
IMPRISONED: April 27, 2009

Duruoglu, editor of the liberal news Web site *Vatan*, was detained during a roundup of suspected members of the leftist organization Revolutionary Headquarters, local news media reported.

Duruoglu was accused of having cooperated with Revolutionary Headquarters, which the Turkish government classified as a terrorist organization, because she knew Ohran Yilmazkaya, one of its leaders. Yilmazkaya died in a shootout with police on the same day Duruoglu was arrested.

Duruoglu said she had known Yilmazkaya from their time in college and that she had interviewed him more recently. But she said she had no involvement in the organization or any knowledge of its inner workings. The Istanbul prosecutor's office requested a 15-year jail sentence when Duruoglu appeared in court on October 1, according to news reports. No trial date was set, and she remained in Bakirköy Prison in late year.

UZBEKISTAN: 7

Muhammad Bekjanov, *Erk*
Yusuf Ruzimuradov, *Erk*
IMPRISONED: March 15, 1999

A court in the capital, Tashkent, sentenced Bekjanov, editor of the oppo-

sition newspaper *Erk*, to 14 years in prison and Ruzimuradov, a reporter for the paper, to 15 years in prison. They were convicted of publishing and distributing a banned newspaper that criticized President Islam Karimov, participating in a banned political protest, and attempting to overthrow the regime.

Both men were tortured during their pretrial detention in Tashkent City Prison, which left them with serious injuries, Tashkent-based human rights activists told CPJ. On November 15, 1999, Bekjanov was transferred to “strict-regime” Penal Colony 64/46 in the city of Navoi. Ruzimuradov was transferred to “strict-regime” Penal Colony 64/33 in the village of Shakhali, near the southern city of Karshi.

The wives and children of both men fled to the United States in 1999 after their arrests, Erk Party Secretary-General Aranazar Arifov told CPJ.

In 2003, reporters with the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) and The Associated Press interviewed Bekjanov in the Tashkent Prison Hospital while he was being treated for tuberculosis he contracted in prison. In the interview, the journalist described torture and beatings that resulted in a broken leg and hearing loss in his right ear, IWPR reported.

In 2007, Bekjanov was jailed in the southwestern city of Kasan, according to the independent news Web site *Uznews*. His wife, Nina Bekjanova, who

was allowed to visit him in October 2006, said he told her that he was still subjected to beatings and torture that caused him to lose most of his teeth, among other things, *Uznews* reported.

Exiled journalists, human rights workers, and other CPJ sources said they did not know of Ruzimuradov’s whereabouts or health.

Gayrat Mehliboyev, freelance
IMPRISONED: July 24, 2002

Authorities arrested Mehliboyev, a contributor to the state-run weekly *Hurriyat*, at a Tashkent protest rally in support of the banned Islamist opposition party Hizb ut-Tahrir. Following his arrest, Tashkent police raided his room at a local hostel and seized what they described as extremist religious literature.

Mehliboyev spent six months in pretrial detention before he was taken to court in February 2003. In court, prosecutors said he was a member of a religious extremist group and presented political commentary he had written in the spring 2001 edition of *Hurriyat* as evidence. In the commentary, the journalist argued that Uzbek authorities should give preference to religious rule over Western-style democracy. Prosecutors insisted his arguments contained ideas from the banned Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Although Mehliboyev said repeatedly during the trial that he had been beaten in prison, the court ignored his statements, a Tashkent-based repre-

sentative of Human Rights Watch told CPJ at the time.

On February 18, 2003, a district court in Tashkent sentenced Mehliboyev to seven years in prison on charges of anticonstitutional activities, participating in extremist religious organizations, and inciting religious hatred, according to local and international news reports. An appeals court later cut his term by six months.

While in custody, Mehliboyev was sentenced to yet another prison term. In September 2006, the Tashkent regional court sentenced him to six additional years on extremism charges, the independent news Web site *Uznews* reported. Prison authorities claimed the journalist advocated Hizb ut-Tahrir ideas to other inmates and kept religious writings in his cell. Mehliboyev denied the accusations; he said he had kept only private notes in which he described prison conditions and his treatment.

According to the Tashkent-based human rights group Ezgulik, Mehliboyev was serving his term in a penal colony in the central city of Zarafshan, where he had reportedly been abused.

Ortikali Namazov, Pop Tongi
and *Kishlok Khayoti*
IMPRISONED: August 11, 2004

Authorities convicted Namazov of embezzlement after he wrote several critical articles alleging regional government malfeasance in land management and fiscal auditing, local rights activists reported at the time. He was

the editor of the state newspaper *Pop Tongi* and correspondent for the state newspaper *Kishlok Khayoti*.

Enraged by Namazov’s critique, authorities in the eastern region of Namangan opened a criminal probe against the journalist and his accountants, alleging misuse of newspaper funds and tax evasion. On August 4, 2004, the Turakurgan District Criminal Court in the Namangan region started proceedings.

The journalist said the case had been fabricated in retaliation for his reporting. According to local activists who monitored the trial, prosecutors failed to prove the charges and the judge did not allow Namazov to defend himself. His family reported that their home phone line was cut and that his daughter was suddenly dismissed from her job as a school doctor, Mutabar Tadjibaeva, a local rights activist, told CPJ.

The journalist was sentenced to five and a half years in jail, and his appeal was denied. He was serving his sentence at a prison in eastern Namangan.

Dzhamshid Karimov, freelance
IMPRISONED: September 12, 2006

In September 2006, authorities in the central Jizzakh region forced Dzhamshid Karimov, a freelance journalist and nephew of President Islam Karimov, into a psychiatric facility in the city of Samarkand. He remained there without access to a lawyer, family, or friends.

According to international rights groups, Uzbek authorities refused to provide access to or release information that would allow independent experts to verify the reasons for Karimov's involuntary confinement. Authorities have not disclosed the court order that led to his forced hospitalization.

Karimov contributed to the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting and a number of independent newspapers and regional online publications. He often criticized the social and economic policies of local and national authorities.

Prior to the detention, Jizzakh authorities had followed Karimov and closely monitored his journalism, according to local news reports. In August 2006, police confiscated his passport when he sought an exit visa to attend a journalism seminar in Kyrgyzstan.

Salidzhon Abdurakhmanov, *Uznews*
IMPRISONED: June 7, 2008

Authorities in the western city of Nukus arrested Abdurakhmanov after traffic police claimed they found four ounces (114 grams) of marijuana and less than a quarter ounce (about five grams) of opium in his trunk, the independent news Web site *Uznews* reported. Authorities initially charged the journalist with drug possession intended for personal use.

Abdurakhmanov covered human rights and economic and social issues for *Uznews* and, in the past, had reported for the U.S. government-funded Ra-

dio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Voice of America, and the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting.

The journalist and his lawyers said police planted the drugs in retaliation for his critical reporting. Before his arrest, he had detailed alleged corruption in the regional traffic police for *Uznews*.

After Abdurakhmanov's initial blood tests revealed no traces of narcotics, authorities changed the charge to drug possession with intent to distribute, *Uznews* reported. During the pretrial investigation, authorities questioned him primarily about his journalistic sources and the news outlets to which he contributed, said the journalist's brother, Bakhrom, a lawyer who helped with the defense. Galima Bukharbayeva, editor of *Uznews* and a 2005 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee, said police also searched the journalist's house and confiscated his personal computer along with literature on banned Uzbek opposition leader Muhammad Salikh.

A district court in Nukus heard the case in September 2008. During Abdurakhmanov's trial, his defense lawyer, Rustam Tulyaganov, said, authorities failed to establish a proper chain of custody for the seized drugs. No evidence was offered showing that his fingerprints were on the seized bag. Tulyaganov said prosecutors presented a video in court, purporting to show the seizure of the drugs, but he said the video lacked essential context; for example, a police dog said to have barked at the odor of drugs was not

seen at all on the video.

On October 10, 2008, Judge Kadyrbai Dzhamolov sentenced Abdurakhmanov to 10 years in prison. According to *Uznews*, the journalist was serving his term in a penal colony outside the southern city of Karshi. His health had deteriorated, but prison authorities refused to provide medical treatment, his relatives told *Uznews*.

Dilmurod Saiid, freelance
IMPRISONED: February 22, 2009

Samarkand regional prosecutors seized Saiid at his home in the capital, Tashkent, after a local woman purportedly told prosecutors that she had extorted US\$10,000 from a local businessman on the journalist's order, local press reports said. She withdrew her statement days later and said it had been fabricated.

But Saiid remained in custody and, in March, prosecutors announced that they had found another witness to say that he had extorted money—this time, US\$5,000 in a supposed 2004 incident, the regional news Web site *Ferghana* reported. Prosecutors added a forgery charge based on purported statements from local farmers saying that he had used their signatures to create fraudulent court documents.

Before his arrest, the journalist had reported on government agricultural abuses for the independent regional news Web site *Voice of Freedom* as well as a number of local newspapers. A member of the Tashkent-based human rights group Ezgulik, Saiid had also

helped local farmers defend their rights in regional courts, sources told CPJ.

Saiid's lawyer, Ruhiddin Komilov, said the proceedings were riddled with procedural violations, notably that officials failed to notify him of hearing dates in the case. Human Rights Watch reported that most prosecution witnesses said their statements against the journalist had been falsified.

On July 30, the Tailak District Court in Samarkand convicted Saiid and sentenced him to 12 and a half years in prison, *Ferghana* reported. The journalist was sentenced in a closed proceeding without his defense lawyer, family, or the press in attendance. According to *Voice of Freedom*, Saiid was transferred to a strict-regime penal colony outside the city of Navoi in central Uzbekistan; the prison is known for its large concentration of political prisoners.

In November, Saiid's wife and 6-year-old daughter died in a car accident while on their way to visit him in prison, *Ferghana* reported. Ezgulik appealed for Saiid's release on humanitarian grounds.

VENEZUELA: 1

Gustavo Azócar
Televisora del Táchira, *El Universal*,
and *Gustavoazocar*
IMPRISONED: July 29, 2009

Azócar—host of a political talk show on Táchira-based Televisora del Táchira, correspondent for the na-

tional daily *El Universal* in the western city of San Cristóbal, and author of the blog *Gustavoazocar*—was accused of irregularities in the assignment of a 2000 advertising contract. An outspoken critic of President Hugo Chávez, he was jailed in 2009 after posting information about the long-running case on his blog.

In March 2006, a state prosecutor in western Táchira ordered Azócar's arrest for allegedly failing to appear before a local court. He was released 10 days later and allowed to continue to work, but was not allowed to leave the country or speak publicly about the legal proceedings against him. On July 29, 2009, however, a local judge issued an arrest warrant for him, stating that the journalist violated those conditions by republishing news reports about the case on his blog.

The first trial judge, Fanny Yasmina Becerra, was taken off the case without explanation in August. Becerra, who had overseen the case since May, was about to hear the trial's final witness when the change was made, Azócar told CPJ. A new judge, José Oliveros, was assigned to the case on September 16. Oliveros announced he would begin a new trial and reaffirmed the decision to hold the journalist in custody throughout the proceedings.

Azócar was being held in the Central Penitentiary of the West in Andean Táchira province. He said he was in good health, and told CPJ that prison authorities and other prisoners were treating him well. According to Azócar,

two local journalists were in charge of his TV program while he was jailed and a handful of local journalism students kept up his blog.

VIETNAM: 1

Nguyen Van Hai (Nguyen Hoang Hai)
Dieu Cay

IMPRISONED: April 19, 2008

Hai was arrested and held without charge for five months, according to news reports. A closed court convicted him of tax evasion on September 10, 2008.

Hai, who also goes by the name Nguyen Hoang Hai, was an outspoken commentator on his political blog *Dieu Cay* (The Peasant's Pipe). He was sentenced to two and a half years in prison for failing to pay 10 years of taxes on the part of a building he had rented to an optical shop. International news reports quoted his lawyer as saying the taxes should have been paid by the tenant, according to the rental agreement.

Several of Hai's blog entries had touched on politically sensitive issues. He had reported on national protests against China, which disputes Vietnam's claim to sovereignty over the nearby Spratly and Parcel islands. He also called for demonstrations against the Beijing Olympic torch relay, which was to pass through Ho Chi Minh City, according to the Web site of Viet Tan, an

exiled pro-democracy organization.

In April 2009, Hai was transferred to the southern Cai Tau Prison, several hours from his home in Ho Chi Minh City, and was denied family visits, according to Viet Tan and international human rights groups.

YEMEN: 2

Fuad Rashid, Mukalla Press
IMPRISONED: May 4, 2009

Security forces arrested Rashid, editor-in-chief of *Mukalla Press*, during a raid in Al-Mukalla in the province of Hadhramaut, the news site reported. Authorities did not disclose the basis for the detention.

The site had extensively covered clashes between security forces and disaffected residents of the south of the country. The Sana'a-based government sought throughout the year to restrict coverage of tensions in the south, where demonstrators protested

policies they saw as marginalizing the region and denying it public services.

Salah al-Saqldi, Gulf Aden
IMPRISONED: June 18, 2009

Al-Saqldi, editor-in-chief of the *Gulf Aden* news Web site was arrested by security forces during a raid at his home in Khour Maksar in Aden province, according to local news reports. Security forces confiscated his laptop and camera.

Gulf Aden had intensively covered clashes between security forces and disaffected residents of the south of the country. The Sana'a-based government sought throughout the year to restrict coverage of tensions in the south, where demonstrators protested policies they saw as marginalizing the region and denying it public services.

Aleshteraki, an opposition news Web site, reported in June that al-Saqldi was being held in the security services prison in Sana'a. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

CPJ INTERNATIONAL PRESS FREEDOM AWARDS

Since 1991, CPJ has honored journalists from around the world with its annual International Press Freedom Awards. Recipients have shown extraordinary courage in the face of great risks, standing up to tyrants and documenting events in dark corners of the world. Here are the 2009 awardees:

Mustafa Haji Abdinur, SOMALIA

Mustafa Haji Abdinur is among the very small number of independent journalists still working amid devastating violence in Mogadishu. In 2009 alone, nine Somali journalists were murdered or killed in crossfire.

As a correspondent for Agence France-Presse and editor-in-chief of the independent radio station Radio Simba, Abdinur faces danger every day. He reports from Mogadishu's once-bustling Bakara Market, which has become a stronghold of insurgents in the conflict-ridden city.

In 2007, with the help of a business partner, Abdinur started Radio Simba, which reaches more than 2 million listeners across southern and central Somalia. His work for AFP and several other Western media outlets has made him a target of both insurgents and government authorities. He was beaten by insurgents after assisting two Japanese journalists with the Kyoto News Agency, and arrested by government security forces for airing an interview with a leader of the militant group Al-Shabaab. Despite receiving death threats that prompted his family to relocate, Abdinur has insisted on staying in Mogadishu to report on the unfolding Somali crisis.

Eynulla Fatullayev, AZERBAIJAN

When Eynulla Fatullayev's friend and colleague Elmar Huseynov was murdered, the journalist set out to find the killer. He ended up in jail after his reporting raised

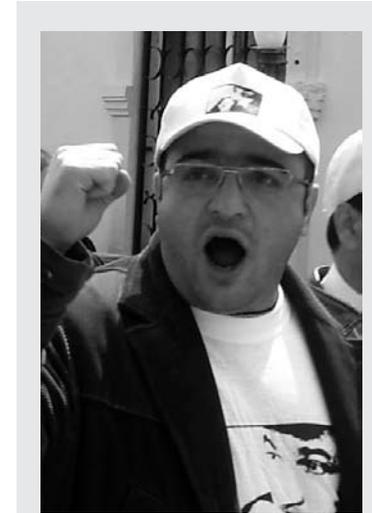


Radio Simba

the possibility of a government cover-up.

Fatullayev was working as an investigative reporter for the *Monitor* magazine in 2005, when Huseynov, the editor, was assassinated. Two years later, Fatullayev produced an in-depth article that charged Azerbaijani authorities with ignoring evidence in the murder and obstructing the investigation. The piece, "Lead and Roses," alleged that Huseynov's murder was ordered by high-ranking officials in Baku and carried out by a criminal group. The article was published in *Realny Azerbaijan*, a newspaper Fatullayev founded after the murder.

Within days, Fatullayev began receiving death threats. Within months, he was convicted on charges of libeling Azerbaijanis in an Internet posting that was falsely attributed to him. His newspaper's offices were then raided and closed. More criminal charges followed, including a "terrorism" count apparently based on his published analysis of Azerbaijan's policies toward Iran. He was convicted on a number of baseless charges and sentenced to an eight-year prison term.



IRFS

Naziha Réjiba, TUNISIA

Naziha Réjiba, one of Tunisia's most critical journalists, is editor of the independent online news journal *Kalima*—which is blocked in her own country. Réjiba, also known as Um Ziad, has been the target of continual government intimidation and harassment: Her home is under constant surveillance, her phone lines are monitored, and she has been summoned for repeated police interrogations.

Réjiba co-founded *Kalima* in 2000 with prominent journalist Sihem Bensedrine, herself a frequent government target. A year later, the two founded the press freedom group Observatoire de la Liberté de la Presse, de L'Édition et de la Création (OLPEC). Both *Kalima*, which



OLPEC

went online after being denied the right to publish a print edition, and OLPEC are banned in Tunisia.

In 2007, after ignoring a series of anonymous threats against her and her family, Rejiba was subjected to a vile smear campaign featuring obscene, fabricated photos of her husband, lawyer and former Member of Parliament Mokhtar Jellali. In 2008, vandals hacked into *Kalima* and shut down the site. When Réjiba wrote an article accusing the government of involvement in the vandalism, she was summoned before a public prosecutor. Although she has not been charged, lawyers said that under the press law she could still face up to three years in prison for publishing “false news.”



AFP

J.S. Tissainayagam, SRI LANKA

On March 7, 2008, J.S. Tissainayagam, editor of the news Web site *OutreachSL* and a columnist for the English-language Sri Lankan *Sunday Times*, went to the offices of the government’s Terrorism Investigation Division to ask about a colleague who had been arrested the day before. He never made it back home.

Tissainayagam, also known as Tissa, was among dozens of ethnic Tamil journalists who were swept up during the 26-year-long conflict between the Sinhalese-dominated government and Tamil separatists. Terrorism Investigation Division officials arrested Tissainayagam and held him without charge for six months. In August 2008, he was charged with inciting “communal disharmony,” an offense under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, in connection with two articles written nearly three years earlier in a now-defunct magazine, *North Eastern Monthly*. In September 2009, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Local journalists say Tissainayagam wrote political columns about Tamil issues that were frequently critical of the government but not partisan to the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. U.S. President Barack Obama highlighted Tissainayagam’s case during his World Press Freedom Day address in May 2009.

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INTERNATIONAL PRESS FREEDOM AWARD RECIPIENTS 1991-2008

| | |
|------|--|
| 1991 | Byron Barrera, <i>La Época</i> , Guatemala; Bill Foley and Cary Vaughan, United States; Tatyana Mitkova, TSN, former Soviet Union; Pius Njawe, <i>Le Messenger</i> , Cameroon; IMPRISONED: Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming, <i>Economics Weekly</i> , China |
| 1992 | Muhammad al-Saqr, <i>Al-Qabas</i> , Kuwait; Sony Esteus, Radio Tropic FM, Haiti; David Kaplan, ABC News, United States; Gwendolyn Lister, <i>The Namibian</i> , Namibia; Thepchai Yong, <i>The Nation</i> , Thailand |
| 1993 | Omar Belhouchet, <i>El Watan</i> , Algeria; Nosa Igiebor, <i>Tell</i> , Nigeria; Veran Matic, Radio B92, Yugoslavia; Ricardo Uceda, <i>Sí</i> , Peru; IMPRISONED: Doan Viet Hoat, <i>Freedom Forum</i> , Vietnam |
| 1994 | Iqbal Athas, <i>The Sunday Leader</i> , Sri Lanka; Daisy Li Yuet-wah, Hong Kong Journalists Association, Hong Kong; Aziz Nesin, <i>Aydinlik</i> , Turkey; In memory of staff journalists, <i>Navidi Vakhsh</i> , Tajikistan; IMPRISONED: Yndamiro Restano, freelance, Cuba |
| 1995 | Veronica Guerin, <i>Sunday Independent</i> , Ireland; Yevgeny Kiselyov, NTV, Russia; Fred M’membe, <i>The Post</i> , Zambia; José Rubén Zamora Marroquín, <i>Siglo Veintiuno</i> , Guatemala; IMPRISONED: Ahmad Taufik, Alliance of Independent Journalists, Indonesia |
| 1996 | J. Jesús Blancornelas, <i>Zeta</i> , Mexico; Yusuf Jameel, <i>Asian Age</i> , India; Daoud Kuttub, Internews Middle East, Palestinian Authority Territories; IMPRISONED: Ocak Isik Yurtcu, <i>Ozgur Gundem</i> , Turkey |
| 1997 | Ying Chan, <i>Yazhou Zhoukan</i> , United States; Shieh Chung-liang, <i>Yazhou Zhoukan</i> , Taiwan; Victor Ivancic, <i>Feral Tribune</i> , Croatia; Yelena Masyuk, NTV, Russia; Freedom Neruda, <i>La Voie</i> , Ivory Coast; IMPRISONED: Christine Anyanwu, <i>The Sunday Magazine</i> , Nigeria |
| 1998 | Grémah Boucar, Radio Anfani, Niger; Gustavo Gorriti, <i>La Prensa</i> , Panama; Goenawan Mohamad, <i>Tempo</i> , Indonesia; Pavel Sheremet, ORT, <i>Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta</i> , Belarus; IMPRISONED: Ruth Simon, Agence France-Presse, Eritrea |
| 1999 | María Cristina Caballero, <i>Semana</i> , Colombia; Baton Haxhiu, <i>Koha Ditore</i> , Kosovo; Jugnu Mohsin and Najam Sethi, <i>The Friday Times</i> , Pakistan; IMPRISONED: Jesús Joel Díaz Hernández, Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes, Cuba |

- 2000 Steven Gan, *Malaysiakini*, Malaysia; Zeljko Kopanja, *Nezavine Novine*, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Modeste Mutinga, *Le Potentiel*, Democratic Republic of Congo; IMPRISONED: Mashallah Shamsolvaezin, *Asr-e-Azadegan* and *Neshat*, Iran
- 2001 Mazen Dana, Reuters, West Bank; Geoff Nyarota, *The Daily News*, Zimbabwe; Horacio Verbitsky, freelance, Argentina; IMPRISONED: Jiang Weiping, *Qianshao*, China
- 2002 Ignacio Gómez, “Noticias Uno,” Colombia; Irina Petrushova, *Respublika*, Kazakhstan; Tipu Sultan, freelance, Bangladesh; IMPRISONED: Feshaye Yohannes, *Setit*, Eritrea
- 2003 Abdul Samay Hamed, Afghanistan; Aboubakr Jamaï, *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* and *Assahifa al-Ousbouiya*, Morocco; Musa Muradov, *Groznensky Rabochy*, Russia; IMPRISONED: Manuel Vázquez Portal, Grupo de Trabajo Decoro, Cuba
- 2004 Alexis Sinduhije, Radio Publique Africaine, Burundi; Svetlana Kalinkina, *Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta*, Belarus; In memory of Paul Klebnikov, *Forbes Russia*, Russia; IMPRISONED: Aung Pwint and Thaug Tun, freelance, Burma
- 2005 Galima Bukharbaeva, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Uzbekistan; Beatrice Mtetwa, media and human rights lawyer, Zimbabwe; Lúcio Flávio Pinto, *Jornal Pessoa*, Brazil; IMPRISONED: Shi Tao, freelance, China
- 2006 Jamal Amer, *Al-Wasat*, Yemen; In memory of Atwar Bahjat, Al-Arabiya, Iraq; Madi Ceesay, *The Independent*, Gambia; Jesús Abad Colorado, freelance, Colombia
- 2007 Mazhar Abbas, ARY One World Television, Pakistan; Gao Qinrong, China; Dmitry Muratov, *Novaya Gazeta*, Russia; Adela Navarro Bello, *Zeta*, Mexico
- 2008 Bilal Hussein, The Associated Press, Iraq; Danish Karokhel and Farida Nekzad, Pajhwok Afghan News, Afghanistan; Andrew Mwenda, *The Independent*, Uganda; IMPRISONED: Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, Grupo de Trabajo Decoro, Cuba

CPJ BURTON BENJAMIN MEMORIAL AWARD

Since 1991, CPJ has given the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award to an individual in recognition of a lifetime of distinguished achievement in service of press freedom. The award honors Burton Benjamin, the CBS News senior producer and former CPJ chairman who died in 1988. In 2009, CPJ honored Anthony Lewis.

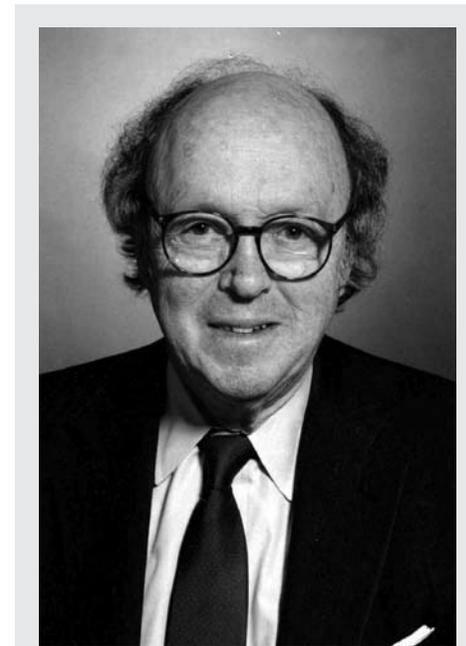
Anthony Lewis

Anthony Lewis is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize and one of the foremost thinkers on freedom of speech and First Amendment rights.

In a distinguished career at *The New York Times*, Lewis served as columnist, bureau chief in London, and reporter in Washington covering the Supreme Court, the Justice Department, and legal affairs. His coverage of the court won a Pulitzer in 1963. His first Pulitzer, in 1955, came when, as a reporter for the *Washington Daily News*, he wrote a series of stories on the improper dismissal of a Navy employee. The articles led to the employee's reinstatement.

Lewis has been a tireless scholar of journalism, having taught and lectured at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism as well as Harvard University. He is the author of five books, including *Make No Law: The Sullivan Case and the First Amendment* and *Gideon's Trumpet*, which won the Edgar Award in 1965. His newest book, *Freedom for the Thought That We Hate: A Biography of the First Amendment*, was published in 2008.

One of the founding board members of CPJ, Lewis has served the organization since its inception in 1981. In February 2008, Lewis joined CPJ's advisory board.



Tony Cenicola

BURTON BENJAMIN MEMORIAL AWARD RECIPIENTS 1991-2008

| | |
|--|---|
| 1991 Walter Cronkite CBS News | 2000 Otis Chandler Times Mirror Company |
| 1992 Katharine Graham The Washington Post Company | 2001 Joseph Lelyveld <i>The New York Times</i> |
| 1993 Ted Turner CNN | 2002 Daniel Pearl <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> |
| 1994 George Soros Open Society Institute | 2003 John F. Burns <i>The New York Times</i> |
| 1995 Benjamin C. Bradlee <i>The Washington Post</i> | 2004 John S. Carroll <i>Los Angeles Times</i> |
| 1996 Arthur Ochs Sulzberger <i>The New York Times</i> | 2005 Peter Jennings ABC News |
| 1997 Ted Koppel ABC News | 2006 Hodding Carter III |
| 1998 Brian Lamb C-SPAN | 2007 Tom Brokaw NBC News |
| 1999 Don Hewitt CBS News | 2008 Beatrice Mtetwa |

CPJ AT A GLANCE

How did CPJ get started? A group of U.S. foreign correspondents created CPJ in response to the often brutal treatment of their local colleagues by authoritarian governments and other enemies of independent journalism.

Who runs CPJ? CPJ has a staff of 23 at its New York headquarters, including area specialists for each major world region. CPJ has a Washington representative, and consultants stationed around the world. A board of prominent journalists directs CPJ's activities.

How is CPJ funded? CPJ is funded solely by contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations. CPJ does not accept government funding.

Why is press freedom important? Without a free press, few other human rights are attainable. A strong press freedom environment encourages the growth of a robust society, which leads to stable, sustainable democracies and healthy social, political, and economic development. CPJ works in more than 120 countries, many of which suffer under repressive regimes, debilitating civil war, or other problems that harm press freedom and democracy.

How does CPJ protect journalists? By publicly revealing abuses against the press and by acting on behalf of imprisoned and threatened journalists, CPJ effectively warns journalists and news organizations where attacks on press freedom are occurring. CPJ organizes vigorous public protests and works through diplomatic channels to effect change. CPJ regularly issues news alerts and protest letters; publishes press freedom commentary daily on the CPJ Blog; and produces *Attacks on the Press*, a comprehensive annual survey of international press freedom.

Where does CPJ get its information? CPJ has full-time program coordinators monitoring the press in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Central Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa. They track developments through their own independent research, fact-finding missions, and firsthand contacts in the field, including reports from other journalists. CPJ shares information on breaking cases with other press freedom organizations through the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, a global electronic network.

When would a journalist call upon CPJ? *In an emergency.* Using local and foreign contacts, CPJ intervenes whenever local and foreign correspondents are in trouble. CPJ notifies news organizations, government officials, and human rights organizations immediately of press freedom violations. *When traveling on assignment.* CPJ advises journalists covering dangerous assignments. *When covering the news.* Attacks against the press are news, and they often serve as the first signal of a crackdown on all freedoms. CPJ is uniquely situated to provide journalists with information and insight into press conditions around the world.

HOW TO REPORT AN ATTACK ON THE PRESS

CPJ needs accurate, detailed information in order to document abuses of press freedom and help journalists in trouble. CPJ corroborates the information and takes action on behalf of the journalists and news organizations involved. Anyone with information about an attack on the press should contact CPJ. Call collect if necessary. Our number is (212) 465-1004. Sources may also e-mail the addresses below, or send a fax to (212) 465-9568.

What to report:

Journalists:

- Arrested
- Censored
- Harassed
- Killed
- Threatened
- Wrongfully expelled
- Assaulted
- Denied credentials
- Kidnapped
- Missing
- Wounded
- Wrongfully sued for libel or defamation

News organizations:

- Attacked, raided, or illegally searched
- Closed by force
- Materials confiscated or damaged
- Censored
- Transmissions jammed
- Wrongfully sued for libel or defamation

Contact information for regional programs:

Africa: (212) 465-9344, x112 E-mail: africa@cpj.org

Americas: (212) 465-9344, x120 E-mail: americas@cpj.org

Asia: (212) 465-9344, x140 E-mail: asia@cpj.org

Europe and Central Asia: (212) 465-9344, x101 E-mail: europe@cpj.org

Middle East and North Africa: (212) 465-9344, x104 E-mail: mideast@cpj.org

What happens next:

Depending on the case, CPJ will:

- Investigate and confirm the report, sending a fact-finding mission if necessary.
- Pressure authorities to respond.
- Notify human rights groups and press organizations around the world, including IFEX, Article 19, Amnesty International, Reporters Sans Frontières, PEN, International Federation of Journalists, and Human Rights Watch.
- Increase public awareness through the press.
- Publish advisories to warn other journalists about potential dangers.

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REGIONAL PROGRAMS

SPOTLIGHT ON GIVING

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Global Campaign Against Impunity Murder is the ultimate form of censorship. One reporter is killed, and hundreds are sent a message that certain topics are too dangerous to be discussed. Since 1992, more than 570 journalists have been murdered in direct relation to their work, CPJ research shows. While hundreds more have died in combat or other dangerous circumstances, murder is the leading cause of work-related deaths.

In 2009, with the generous support of the Knight Foundation, CPJ continued its global campaign against impunity. The initiative focuses primarily on Russia and the Philippines, very different countries that share two traits: They are among the world's deadliest nations for journalists, and they are among the worst in solving these crimes.

CPJ conducted three advocacy missions to the Philippines in 2009, meeting with prosecutors, witnesses, local journalists, and government leaders. In December 2009, CPJ joined with other international groups in a mission to offer assistance to the relatives of the 31 media workers slain in Maguindanao province.

In September 2009, a CPJ delegation traveled to Moscow to issue an investigative report on unsolved journalist killings in Russia, *Anatomy of Injustice*, and to meet with investigators and government officials. Russian officials agreed to re-examine several cases and meet with CPJ again in 2010 to discuss their progress.



CPJ board member Kati Marton at a September 2009 press conference in Moscow. (CPJ Photo)

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

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| | |
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| Agence France-Presse | Factiva |
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| Debevoise & Plimpton LLP | |

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CONTRIBUTORS

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