

Dangerous Assignments

covering the global press freedom struggle

Spring | Summer 2005

www.cpj.org



Kazem Akhavan, IRNA, Lebanon. Mohamed Hassaine, Alger Républicain, Algeria. Maksim Shabalin, Nevskoye Vremya, Russia. Feliks Titov, Nevskoye Vremya, Russia. Sergei Ivanov, Nevskoye Vremya, Russia. Andrew Shumack, freelancer, Russia. Manasse Mugabo, United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda Radio, Rwanda. Vitaly Shevchenko, Lita-M, Russia. Andrei Barmuk, Lita-M, Russia. Yelena Petrova, Lita-M, Russia. Emmanuel Mungwanzi, Kwantan National Television, Rwanda. Djuro Slavuj, Radio Slobodna, Serbia and Montenegro. Belmonde Magloire Missinhou, Le Point Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo. Oleksandr Panych, Donbasske Novosti, Ukraine. Fred Nerac, ITV News, Iraq. Acquitté Kisembo, Agence France-Presse, Democratic Republic of Congo. Ali Astamirov, Agence France-Presse, Russia. Reda Helal, Al-Ahram, Egypt. Asan al-Sumari, Summit Media, Iraq.

MISSING

Guy-André Kieffer covered the dangerous world of cocoa, guns, and politics.

Like 19 other journalists worldwide, he vanished...



**Eight Grave Threats to Press Freedom
Cuba's World of Horror**

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On the cover: Guy-André Kieffer (above) was photographed on Easter 1992. The names of the 19 other journalists who have gone missing while working are superimposed on the photograph, along with the names of their associated media outlets, and the countries where they disappeared.

Photo: Kieffer Family Archives Art: Virginia Anstett

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A look at recent red-letter cases from the CPJ files...

December

9 A U.S. judge sentences reporter Jim Taricani (below) to six months of home confinement for refusing to reveal the source of a leaked FBI tape. For the first time in three years, the United States joins CPJ's list of nations that imprison journalists.



21 French reporters Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot are released after being held for four months by kidnappers in Iraq. Armed groups abduct at least 22 journalists in 2004.

26 Dozens of *Serambi Indonesia* staff members die in a devastating tsunami that strikes south Asia. The daily, one of the few news sources in Indonesia's war-ravaged Aceh province, resumes publishing days later.

January

3 CPJ reports that 56 journalists were killed in connection with their work in 2004—the deadliest year in a decade. Murder remains the top cause of work-related deaths.

February

1 Nepal's King Gyanendra declares a state of emergency, curtails civil rights, and institutes broad press restrictions. A CPJ delegation later travels to Kathmandu to document abuses and seek reforms.

3 Four countries with long records of press repression—China, Cuba, Eritrea,

and Burma—account for more than three-quarters of the 122 journalists jailed around the world in 2004, CPJ says in a new report.

March

1 New Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko says investigators have detained suspects in the 2000 murder of Internet reporter Georgy Gongadze—the first significant development in the long-stalled probe.

4 Italian security agent Nicola Calipari is killed and journalist Giuliana Sgrena (below) is wounded when U.S. forces fire on their car near the Baghdad airport. Kidnappers had released Sgrena just minutes earlier.



22 CPJ urges Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to put an end to a wave of violence against journalists. An alarming number of assaults and threats are reported.

April

4 Mexican reporter Dolores Guadalupe García Escamilla is shot in front of her radio station in the border town of Nuevo Laredo. She later dies. That week, Gulf Coast newspaper owner Raúl Gibb Guerrero is ambushed and killed.

12 CPJ representatives conclude fact-finding missions in the Gambia and Nepal by calling for broad governmental reforms and press protections.

May

3 With at least 18 journalists slain in five years, the Philippines is the most murderous nation in the world for journalists, CPJ says in a report issued for World Press Freedom Day. Iraq, Colombia, Bangladesh, and Russia also make CPJ's list of murderous places. ■

As They Said

“Before God, before the people, before my conscience I’m clean.”

—Former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma to reporters, in response to allegations that he was involved in the 2000 murder of journalist Georgy Gongadze.

“You don’t know whom to turn to for help because officials and cops are somehow tied to organized crime. You don’t hire bodyguards because they’re expensive, and even if you have them, if somebody wants you dead, they will find a way to kill you.”

—Roberto Gálvez Martínez, news director at a Nuevo Laredo radio station, to the *Dallas Morning News*. The slaying of one of his reporters was among several recent attacks on Mexican journalists.

“We were turned to stone when officials told us. The behavior of the American soldiers, in such a serious incident, must be explained. Someone must take responsibility.”

—Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi on national television after U.S. troops wounded journalist Giuliana Sgrena and killed security agent Nicola Calipari.



Reuters/Nir Elias



Reuters/Nir Elias

Southern Gaza Strip

While covering the aftermath of a gun battle, Itzik Saban became part of the story.

Saban, a reporter for the Tel Aviv daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*, was summoned to a press briefing at an army camp near the isolated Israeli settlement of Morag. The Israeli commander in the region, Gen. Shmuel Zacai, was to announce that four hours earlier that September 2004 morning, under the cover of dense fog, three Palestinian gunmen had infiltrated the camp and killed three Israeli soldiers. Two of the Palestinians had been killed; one had escaped.

When Saban and other journalists arrived for the briefing, the third Palestinian leapt out from behind a green-

house and opened fire, according to international news reports. Reporters were forced to take cover. As the shooting escalated, Saban was shot in the leg. The fighting, transmitted live on Israeli Army Radio, lasted for a half hour before the gunman was killed.

The Palestinian groups Islamic Jihad, the Popular Resistance Committees, and the Ahmed Abu Rish Brigades claimed responsibility for the raid, *The New York Times* reported. Saban has recovered and is back on the job in Gaza, *Yedioth Ahronoth* editors said. Since the second Intifada began in 2000, dozens of journalists have been wounded in the West Bank and Gaza, and seven have been killed. ■

—Leigh Newman

Would-be Web Masters

By Mick Stern

Obeying no power but the pressure to keep expanding, the Internet has grown like kudzu in the absence of international regulation. Now the World Summit for the Information Society, or WSIS, is moving to establish international policy for the great digital revolution. Yet any plan to manage the Internet is at best unnecessary and at worst detrimental to a medium that gives ordinary people a public forum to speak their minds. A summit backed by some of the world's worst press freedom abusers—including China, Russia, and Tunisia—is itself cause for grave concern.

The International Telecommunications Union, an agency of the United Nations similar in structure to the World Health Organization, launched WSIS. The first major WSIS conference, in Geneva in 2003, drew more than 11,000 participants, including representatives from 175 countries, 50 U.N. entities, 481 nongovernmental organizations, 98 businesses, and 631 media outlets. In the run-up to the next major gathering—in Tunis, November 16 through 18, 2005—a whole galaxy of preparatory conferences, regional and thematic meetings, working groups, and caucuses have been held or are scheduled. Subjects under discussion include infrastructure, technical standards, the digital divide between rich and poor

Mick Stern is Web master and systems administrator for the Committee to Protect Journalists.

countries, environment, health, gender, Internet governance, spam, cyber-fraud—and freedom of expression.

Some results thus far have been encouraging. The participants produced a set of principles that reaffirms Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states “that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.”

The WSIS statement went on to say, “We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of media.”

But this is only one side of WSIS. Many participants are deeply disturbed by the decision to allow Tunisia to host the next conference. Tunisia's record on media freedom is dismal. The government blocks dozens of political Web sites, and jailed online writer Zouhair Yahyehou for a year and a half for the crime of publishing his opinions about the regime. Even as censorship continues unabated, President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali flaunts his invitation to host the summit as evidence that the international community condones his strong-arm methods.

Other potential hazards loom. The Working Group on Internet Governance has a particularly problematic task. The problems begin with the very definition of “governance.” Does it mean control, management, or oversight? Right now, the battle is focused on technical standards, some of which the U.S. nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigning Names and Numbers, or ICANN, sets. Some WSIS participants want to internationalize ICANN, more out of opposition to the United States than from any substantive grievances, as ICANN has confined itself to technical administration and has steered clear of politics. The Chinese in particular have been firm voices for internationalizing ICANN.

Participants also have other ideas. Chinese delegates have stated that governments, not private entities, should be in charge of governance

because, they argue, governments are more representative. It is hard to say whom the Chinese government represents, other than itself. China now possesses the world's most sophisticated system of Internet censorship, including the ability to scan e-mails in transit for “subversive” content. It is safe to assume that the Chinese concept of governance has nothing to do with the free exchange of ideas.

The Chinese are not alone in their attitudes. At a WSIS meeting titled “Freedom of Expression in Cyberspace,” held in Paris in February, Yuri Ulianovsky of ITAR-TASS, the Russian news agency that bends to the will of the Kremlin, told participants that “a regulatory mechanism must exist” to ensure that Internet users get “credible information from trustworthy sources.” Given Russian President Vladimir Putin's ongoing campaign to stifle the independent media, such appeals to credibility and trustworthiness should be neither believed nor trusted.

At the same meeting in Paris, Ronald Koven of the World Press Freedom Committee argued that the Internet needs no regulation, noting that the question of governance has been considered before and abandoned. “Revisiting it would open the doors to countless dangers,” he said.

The Internet, though an unruly frontier, has democratized communication and broken down the traditional barrier between news provider and news consumer. Certainly, problems exist, such as spam, fraud, and viruses. But for all their technological novelty, these phenomena are basically just criminal nuisances; they do not overlap with journalism at any point and should not be used as an excuse to censor and control the Internet.

The Internet is still in its infancy, and the summit could influence its development in unforeseeable ways. If we let WSIS slip by unnoticed, we could wake up one morning to find the Web run by a set of masters more interested in filtering content than spreading it. ■

Fleeing Home

A journalist is forced into exile as Mugabe tightens grip.

By Brian Latham

The Zimbabwean media has been under siege for years, due to the iron-fisted rule of President Robert Mugabe. In February, three journalists working for international news outlets fled after security officials occupied their offices and told them they would likely be imprisoned. Most observers believed that the move was designed to silence critical coverage before the March 31 parliamentary elections. Brian Latham, a Bloomberg News correspondent, tells the story from his exile in London:

On Valentine's Day this year, a decades-old hub of Zimbabwean journalism was suddenly closed. The notorious Law and Order Section of the Zimbabwean police raided the little Harare office—known as the Old Gentleman's News Cooperative—that was shared by Bloomberg News, The Associated Press, and the *Times* of London.

I was at my desk when I was ordered to stop writing and told to call my colleagues Angus Shaw, a freelancer for the AP, and Jan Raath, a contributor to the *Times*. It was a moment we all knew could happen—but we thought it never would. Things had changed subtly in the weeks before the raid. The country's controversial information minister, Jonathan Moyo, who had carried out Mugabe's repressive media policies for years, had fallen

from grace. Moyo's departure, coupled with a slight relaxation of the heavily state-controlled press, had given hope that reporting from Zimbabwe might become easier.

But the raid on our office put an end to positive speculation. Police occupied the office all day. We were kept from working and making phone calls while they conducted illegal searches. Accused of being spies, of working illegally as journalists, of committing "economic crimes," and of publishing material detrimental to the state, we faced potentially long prison sentences. Meanwhile, we were warned, as was our fearless lawyer, Beatrice Mtetwa, that this time "it was for real." The police wanted to make an example of us before the parliamentary elections.

The charges seemed to change, then change again, at the whim of the police officers, who refused to give their names. They told us that they knew where we lived, that they knew the registration numbers of our vehicles. Heavily sarcastic and uncaring of criticism, the senior officer told Mtetwa, "If you want, we can get a search warrant; it makes no difference. We will search this place and you will not be present."

They did search, illegally removing hard drives from an AP computer. Finding news photographs of Mugabe, they accused us of "mocking the president." After an entire day with the police, during which they even followed us to the bathroom, they painstakingly took down our home addresses and cell phone numbers—the very addresses they had earlier recited to us. "We will either come to you at your homes or summon you to Harare Central Police Station," the senior officer told us.

When Mtetwa asked them what information they had against us, they said, "We do it the other way around. First we find the suspect, then we get the information." As they left, Raath

asked for their names. "Call me Captain Rice," said the senior officer in a derisory reference to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who had recently been vilified in Zimbabwe's state-controlled press.

During the day, we received information that it would not be safe to remain in Zimbabwe, let alone go to our homes. Sources within the police and the ruling ZANU-PF party tipped us off that we faced lengthy incarceration. All three of us fled, using different roads and border checkpoints, and avoiding the heavily policed Harare



Sarah Sherrington

Brian Latham, exiled from his home in Zimbabwe, lives and works in London.

International Airport. By motorbike, I rode first to collect my passport, which I'd left at a friend's house for safekeeping, away from the prying eyes of Zimbabwe's spy agency, the Central Intelligence Organization.

We fled with nothing, leaving our homes and families, our possessions and responsibilities for the limbo of a no man's land. I left behind my four children, two still in school, my home in the city, and a small cottage in the country. I left the security of my job with Bloomberg News. I left my friends, my cat, my two dogs, and my clothes. Even my toothbrush and shaving gear were lost in the hurry to avoid a fetid, lice-ridden prison cell. Though foreign correspondents, we are all Zimbabwean citizens. But now we are citizens unable to live and work in our own country. Instead, we still report on Zimbabwe, but from our country's burgeoning diaspora. ■

COVER STORY

Guy-André Kieffer broke stories on cocoa, guns, and alleged corruption.



Disappeared

Politics, money, and the press stir the mysterious case of Guy-André Kieffer.

By Julia Crawford

Before vanishing from the parking lot of an Abidjan supermarket on April 16, 2004, Guy-André Kieffer wrote about the volatile mix of cocoa profits, guns, and politics in Ivory Coast. A freelance journalist of French and Canadian descent—and one of the few foreign reporters left in the conflict-ridden West African nation—Kieffer had a hand in business himself as a consultant and adviser. Just two years into his stay in the former French colony, he had collected a wide network of political and business connections.

And, by his own account, Kieffer had gathered some enemies. In the days before he disappeared and his normally busy cell phone suddenly went dead, the 54-year-old Kieffer

Julia Crawford is CPJ's Africa program coordinator. **Alexis Arieff**, Africa program research associate, contributed to this story.

told friends and family he had been getting threats and was concerned about his safety.

The only named suspect in his disappearance is an Ivoirian businessman related by marriage to the country's first family. Michel Legré, in custody since May 2004, claimed in questioning before a French judge that a number of people close to President Laurent Gbagbo were involved, several news organizations reported and an Ivoirian official confirmed for CPJ. Yet no other suspects have been arrested and some witnesses have been hard to find. Legré's reported testimony has ignited speculation that Kieffer's disappearance was a state-sponsored crime, although investigators are also said to be considering a personal money matter or grudge as a possible motive.

With its many unanswered questions, the case has stirred political intrigue and charges of government

obstruction on two continents. The investigation has appeared to sputter at times as relations worsened between France and its former colony—leaving Kieffer's family and friends to fight for the truth.

"This case has always been politicized. The fate of Guy-André Kieffer is a nuisance to Franco-Ivoirian relations," his wife, Osange, said from Paris where she lives with the couple's 18-year-old daughter. Although most people believe he is dead, she has not abandoned hope.

"As long as they have not produced his body, I will not say that my husband is dead," Osange Kieffer said. He is one of 20 journalists whose disappearances over more than two decades may have been linked to their work, CPJ research shows.

Cooperation between France and Ivory Coast on the Kieffer case has been complicated by the two countries' long history, as well as their recently strained relations. Ivory Coast was a French colony for more than 60 years, and ties between it and France remained strong even after its independence in 1960. But tensions have risen since the Ivoirian civil war began in 2002. Ivoirian government supporters have accused France of supporting the rebels, and the two countries briefly engaged in hostile actions last year.

Nevertheless, the nations are still bound by a number of agreements—including one that pledges them to cooperate on certain judicial investigations such as the Kieffer case. In interviews with CPJ, Kieffer's family and friends expressed confidence in the efforts of the French investigating judge, Patrick Ramaël, but accused both the Ivoirian and French governments of obstructing the investigations for political reasons.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Jean-Baptiste Mattei denied such allegations. "There is absolutely no desire to hamper [Ramaël's] movements in any way," he told CPJ. Ale Yéo, chief of staff for the Ivoirian justice minister, said the two countries were cooperating well on the judicial inquiry. "Each time that Judge Ramaël asked for authorization to come to Abidjan it was granted. And he has been able to carry out investigations without any problems from the Justice Ministry," Yéo said. "But some of the people he wanted to question refused to answer the summons. And some have disappeared."

Aline Richard, Kieffer's friend and colleague for 15 years at the French business newspaper *La Tribune*, said she believes he was targeted for his investigations into sensitive business issues. Kieffer was considered a specialist in

Kieffer's family and friends accuse both the Ivoirian and French governments of obstructing the investigation for political reasons.

the profitable cocoa and coffee sectors, and worked briefly as a consultant for a company that advised the Ivoirian government on reforming the cocoa trade.

Kieffer had undertaken several investigative stories, notably one that explored the alleged use of cocoa profits for arms purchases, according to the Paris-based business newsletter *La Lettre du Continent*, to which Kieffer was a

The Missing

At least 19 other journalists have gone missing since CPJ began compiling case files more than two decades ago. Detailed reports are available at www.cpj.org. Here are their brief stories:

Kazem Akhavan, IRNA, July 4, 1982, Lebanon

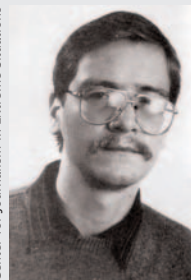
Akhavan, a photographer for Iran's official news agency, was seized at a checkpoint near Byblos. Initial theories centered on Phalangist militiamen, but a 1998 story in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* raised speculation that Israel could have

been holding the journalist.

Mohamed Hassaine, Alger *Républicain*, March 1, 1994, Algeria

Hassaine, a reporter, was seized by unknown assailants. Four years later, CPJ conducted interviews in the capital, Algiers, but

Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations



Maksim Shabalin

discovered no evidence of his whereabouts.

Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations



Feliks Titov

Maksim Shabalin and Feliks Titov, *Nevskoye Vremya*,

freelance contributor. His last story concerned a payment to Guinea-Bissau from a frozen bank account belonging to that country's late former dictator Ansumane Mane. Kieffer's story charged that some Ivoirian officials took commissions from the account, according to *La Lettre du Continent*.

While not ruling out the possibility that such stories led to Kieffer's disappearance, Stephen Smith, Africa editor of the French daily *Le Monde*, is more circumspect. Smith told CPJ that Kieffer was "walking a borderline" between journalism and business, and that he sometimes used his reporting to influence business deals. In a May 5, 2004 article, *Le Monde* said that Kieffer "informed some people, advised others and, under transparent pseudonyms, went hammer and tongs for senior personalities, without worrying unduly about the possible dangers."

France opened a judicial inquiry into Kieffer's disappearance in May 2004, after his wife filed a complaint in a Paris court. Ramaël went to Abidjan that month to begin his probe and questioned Legré, the brother-in-law of Ivory Coast's first lady, Simone Gbagbo, and a regular source for Kieffer.

Legré was due to meet Kieffer for lunch the day he disappeared and is the last person known to have seen him.



Anti-French protests in Abidjan in fall 2004 strained relations between Ivory Coast and France, making cooperation in the Kieffer case more difficult.

AP/Schalk van Zuydam

Legré told *Le Monde* in May 2004 that Kieffer did not turn up for their lunch appointment but had called to say that he was at the nearby Prima supermarket, where Legré met him in the parking lot. "He was nervous, tense," Legré told *Le Monde*. "He told me only that he was due to meet a white guy who had owed him money for a long time, and that he planned to go to Ghana for the weekend." Legré told *Le Monde* that he left without asking further questions.

During 10 hours of questioning before the French judge, Legré identified a number of senior defense, security, and

February 27, 1995, Russia

Shabalin, assistant political editor of the St. Petersburg daily, and Titov, a photographer, were reported missing in Chechnya after leaving Nazran for their fifth trip to the republic.

Sergei Ivanov, Nevskoye Vremya,



Sergei Ivanov

June 16, 1995, Russia

Ivanov, a correspondent for the paper,

Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations

went to Chechnya to look for colleagues Shabalin and Titov. He vanished after entering a mountainous region, said Alla Manilova, the editor-in-chief.

Andrew Shumack, freelancer, July 28, 1995, Russia

Shumack, an American working for the *St. Petersburg Press*,

was last seen leaving Grozny. U.S. Embassy officials made repeated trips to the region to no avail.

Manasse Mugabo, United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda Radio, August 19, 1995, Rwanda

Mugabo, director of the UNAMIR radio

service, left Kigali for Uganda and has not been heard from since.

Vitaly Shevchenko, Andrei Bazvluk, and Yelena Petrova, Lita-M, August 11, 1996, Russia

Shevchenko and Bazvluk, Ukrainian television journalists, were last seen in Grozny during heavy

fighting between Russian and Chechen forces. Petrova, a senior executive of Lita-M, was also reported missing after failing to contact her studio.

Emmanuel Munyemanzi, Rwandan National Television, May 2, 1998, Rwanda

finance officials as being involved in the disappearance, Yéo said. Of those named, each has publicly denied involvement, and none has officially been declared a suspect. Investigators have questioned most of the officials, Yéo said, although they have been unable to find two soldiers named by Legré. Ramaël declined comment when contacted by CPJ, citing judicial confidentiality rules.

Shortly after the French investigation started, Ivoirian authorities launched their own inquiry. They arrested Legré and charged him as an accessory in the kidnapping, confinement, and—though no body has been produced—murder of Kieffer. The French judge has also charged Legré with complicity in Kieffer’s kidnap and confinement.

One of Legré’s lawyers, Alain Assamoi, told CPJ that Ramaël had pressured his client into linking government officials to the disappearance, and that Legré had later retracted the assertions. He said his client had pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Véhi Étienne, a presidential adviser, said allegations linking senior officials to Kieffer’s disappearance were “part of propaganda campaigns seeking to soil the image of the president” and were promoted by “media close to the opposition and to the armed rebellion.” He added, “There are several possible trails outside of the investigation pursued by the French judge,” including ones implicating “foreign citizens who have nothing to do with the president.”

Citing the two countries’ judicial cooperation agreement, Ramaël has requested that Legré be transferred to France for two months of questioning. But at the end of February, Ramaël returned from a fourth visit to Abidjan without the suspect. Legré remained in prison in Abidjan when *Dangerous Assignments* went to press.

Richard said she believes France is unwilling to pressure the Ivoirian authorities for fear of further damaging relations with President Gbagbo, whom it sees as a necessary partner in the fragile peace process.

Such concerns prompted Richard to set up the Truth for Guy-André Kieffer Association. Composed mainly of journalists, the group has launched a petition on its Web site calling on the French and Ivoirian governments to “employ every possible effort to find the truth.” The association collects information about the case, lobbies the governments, and encourages media coverage.

Osange Kieffer, who has met with Ramaël, accused the French authorities of trying to stall the judge’s investigation and block Legré’s transfer. An official from the French Foreign Ministry said that any delays were due to normal procedures and that the transfer request was being processed.

“I know the judges and I believe they are interested in finding the truth,” *Le Monde* editor Smith said. “But I think it embarrasses the two governments and there is extreme tension between the two governments.”

The strain was at its worst last November when Ivoirian government air attacks on rebel positions killed nine French peacekeepers. The French retaliated by destroying most of the small Ivoirian air force. This action led to violent anti-French demonstrations in Abidjan that were fueled by state-owned media. Thousands of expatriates fled the country.

Despite a peace agreement brokered by France in early 2003, Ivory Coast remains divided between a rebel-held north and a government-controlled south. Most foreign reporters have left the country for security reasons, especially after the October 2003 murder of Radio France Inter-

Munyemanzi, head of production services, disappeared in Kigali. Two months earlier, the director of the Rwanda Information Office had accused him of sabotage because of a technical problem during the taping of a political debate.

Djuro Slavuj, Radio Pristina, August 21, 1998, Serbia and Montenegro
Slavuj, a reporter at the state-run Radio Pristina, and his driver disappeared on assignment in Kosovo. Having left Orahovac, they were en route to Malisevo.

Belmonde Magloire Missinhoun, Le Point Congo, October 3, 1998, Democratic Republic of Congo
Missinhoun, owner of the independent financial newspaper, has not been seen since his arrest after a traffic accident with a military vehicle in Kinshasa. Missinhoun

had ties to the government of Mobutu Sese Seko, which had fallen a year earlier.

Oleksandr Panych, Donetskiye Novosti, November 2002, Ukraine
Panych, a journalist and manager for the daily newspaper, disappeared from the southeastern city



Donetskiye Novosti

Oleksandr Panych

of Donetsk. He wrote about drugs and business issues.



Family Archives

Fred Nerac

Fred Nerac, ITV News, March 22, 2003, Iraq

nationale correspondent Jean Hélène by an Ivoirian police officer. Hélène's murder was widely blamed on anti-French sentiments that were whipped up by local media and pro-government forces.

Richard complains that Kieffer's case has received less attention from the French government and media than those of journalists Florence Aubenas, Christian Chesnot, and Georges Malbrunot, who were abducted in Iraq. Aubenas, who works for the independent daily *Libération*, was taken in Baghdad with her Iraqi translator on January 5. Chesnot of Radio France Internationale (RFI) and Malbrunot of independent daily *Le Figaro* were released in December after being held captive for four months by an Iraqi insurgent group.

"I think it's absolutely normal that people mobilize for Aubenas, Chesnot and Malbrunot," Richard told CPJ. "What is not normal is that they don't do the same for Kieffer. ... If you are a freelance and you go missing, it's more difficult."

The vast majority of the 20 journalists on CPJ's missing list disappeared in conflict zones such as Chechnya, Kosovo, and Iraq; others vanished in remote areas where there is little media attention. Nearly all went missing in places where the rule of law is weak, the judiciary ineffective, and the government indifferent to solving such cases.

Left behind are the journalists' families who, in most cases, have few credible details to help them understand what may have happened. They have little to cling to but the fight itself—the struggle to keep their cases on government agendas and in the headlines.

"It's very, very important," Osange Kieffer said, "because it means the cloak of silence cannot fall." ■

Le 16 avril 2004, le journaliste Guy-André Kieffer était enlevé en Côte d'Ivoire



**Nous ne l'oublions pas.
Nous exigeons la vérité.**

Association Vérité pour Guy-André Kieffer
www.guyandrekieffer.org

Truth for Guy-André Kieffer Association

The Truth for Guy-André Kieffer Association displays posters in Paris bookstores saying: "We have not forgotten. We demand the truth."

Nerac, a cameraman for the British news organization, disappeared when his car came under fire en route to Basra. A security firm hired by the news agency said that Nerac and translator Hussein Othman might have been pulled from their car by Iraqi forces.

Acquitté Kisembo, Agence France-Presse, June 26, 2003, Democratic Republic of Congo

Kisembo, a fixer and reporter, was reported missing in Bunia. Local journalists say militiamen loyal to the rebel Union of Congolese Patriots may have seized Kisembo.

Ali Astamirov, Agence France-Presse, July 4, 2003, Russia

Astamirov, a correspondent, was seized by gunmen when he stopped for gas in Nazran, in the republic of Ingushetia. Astamirov reported on sensitive issues such as the war in Chechnya and had endured months of



Ali Astamirov

harassment by police and security forces.

Reda Helal, Al-Ahram, August 11, 2003, Egypt

Helal, an editor with Egypt's semi-official daily, was last seen entering his home in Cairo. Helal was considered controversial by some because of his support for the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

Isam al-Shumari, Sudost Media, August 15, 2004, Iraq

Al-Shumari, a cameraman for the small production company, is believed to have disappeared in Fallujah. Relatives said he was traveling with cameraman Mahmoud Abbas, who was killed in heavy fighting. ■

Reuters/Claudia Daut



Jorge Olivera Castillo and his wife, Nancy Alfaya, reunite in their Havana home after the editor's December 2004 release.

Surviving Cuba's Prisons

Unbowed, Jorge Olivera Castillo emerges from jail to speak out.

By Sauro González Rodríguez

For the crime of reporting the news, Jorge Olivera Castillo spent most of two years in the hellish conditions of Cuba's prisons. The director of a small independent news agency, the Havana Press, Olivera Castillo was one of 29 journalists arrested in a massive government crackdown on dissidents and the independent media in March 2003. He was convicted in a one-day, closed-door proceeding under a law prohibiting acts "aimed at subverting the internal order of the nation and destroying its political, economic, and social system."

Olivera Castillo was sentenced to 18 years in prison, parts of which he spent in State Security Department confinement at Villa Marista, the Guantánamo provincial prison, the Guantánamo provincial hospital, and a prison infirmary in western Matanzas province. Freed last December 6, he was among a half dozen, imprisoned journalists released on medical parole in 2004. After his release, the 43-year-old editor discussed with CPJ his early career in the state media, his professional evolution, his imprisonment, and his plans for the future. Here are translated excerpts of his interview with CPJ's Sauro González Rodríguez:

Sauro González Rodríguez is research associate for CPJ's Americas program.

SGR: Tell us about your work for the official media.

JOC: From 1983 to 1993, I worked at the Cuban Institute for Radio and Television as an editor. During the decade I worked at this state-owned entity, I spent two years in the national television news system where news programs, news reports are made. I had a close experience with all the censorship, the self-censorship, and all the news manipulation that takes place in the official media.

SGR: Describe this climate of self-censorship.

JOC: Propaganda is very tightly controlled by a Central Committee agency called the Revolutionary Orientation Department, where information and indoctrination policies are designed. All media are subordinated to the strategies devised by this agency. People fear crossing a line—they don't know where it is or what the limits are—and that's where self-censorship comes in. They censor themselves for fear of retaliation.

SGR: When and why did you decide to join the independent press?

JOC: One thing that had a profound effect were the events during perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union. That opened my eyes, made me ask myself some questions and search for answers. I began maturing as time went by, and then I was faced with how to break the barrier of fear, of terror, which is something natural in Cuba, part of our culture.

I thought it was routine harassment. I never thought it would be the beginning of a terrible period in Cuban history.

SGR: Can you describe for us how independent journalism is done in Cuba?

JOC: We face shortages of materials, a lack of information sources. Everything conspires against you; everything is so adverse, particularly the way to send your reports abroad. There's no computer network cheap enough for us to send our reports; phone communications are terrible.

Nevertheless, we have been able to articulate a nationwide movement of independent journalists. We even published a magazine that was shut down with our imprisonment, *De Cuba* magazine, which was developed by the journalists' association Sociedad de Periodistas Manuel Márquez Sterling. The persecution, harassment, economic adversities, lack of proper technology—a number of factors conspired against our doing a quality job.

SGR: Would you describe your arrest?

JOC: I was at my wife's aunt's house napping when plainclothes agents showed up with a search warrant. My wife woke me up, a bit scared, and they all came in and carried out an exhaustive search. They took many pictures of everything they confiscated, which wasn't much: two old, worn-out typewriters and many news stories; books on politics, economics, even world literature; and a small 8mm camcorder. When we went downstairs to go to my house, the street was blocked. There were several police cars and motorbikes; it was a huge police operation. People were terrified, and many were watching from their balconies.

The search at my house was very similar. While they were searching, one of them turned on a radio and tuned in the "Mesa Redonda" talk show—which was talking about us, about the crackdown taking place at the same time at many homes in Cuba, and they were using epithets to denigrate and slander us. Around 10, 10:30 p.m., I arrived in Villa Marista, where they carried out a thorough body search and gave me prisoner's clothes.

SGR: Were you expecting the arrest?

JOC: I wasn't expecting it, honestly. I thought it would be what had happened many times before. When the political police didn't want me to cover an event, they would simply knock on my door and tell me I couldn't leave. I thought it was routine harassment. I never thought it would be the beginning of a terrible period in the history of Cuba.

SGR: Tell us about your experiences in prison.

JOC: To feel that you're imprisoned, are surrounded by walls and bars everywhere, without reason, it's a double shock that you suffer. I spent 36 days in a cell with common criminals in Villa Marista. The four of us could not stand at the same time, that's how small the cell was. There was no ventilation and we had a fluorescent lamp on 24 hours a day. The bathroom was a hole; the smell was unbearable.

Then the trial came. The trial was a sham, a grotesque sham. I only saw my lawyer 10 to 15 minutes before my court hearing was to start. I felt I had been convicted in advance. Thank God I had the strength of character and could face such a difficult situation. I did not keep silent. I defended myself against all the allegations prosecutors made, full of visceral hatred—I can't forget that. I refuted all of them.

Then there was the distance. I was sent over 900 kilometers (560 miles) from my place of residence, which was an additional punishment for my wife and my children. I was first at the Combinado Provincial de Guantánamo, and we were placed with common prisoners for 17 days. Then we were placed in solitary confinement. We had an hour a day to get some sun. I began having pain in my bones, due to the cell's humidity and the lack of sunlight. I was sick all



Jorge Olivera Castillo, right, and Miguel Galban edit the independent magazine *De Cuba*, which ran articles on race and reform.

of one year. The food arrived rotten sometimes, and the water was muddy and brown. I contracted parasites twice. I would tell the doctor, “Look, the food is poorly prepared and sometimes rotten. The water is contaminated; we should not drink it.” And she would say, “That’s not my problem. My problem is if you get sick.”

And there were lots of insects: mosquitoes, scorpions, flies, ants, lizards. It was a terrible situation. All amid the indifference, the indolence by the medical services and the prison officers. I was later placed in a cell with common prisoners—pedophiles and murderers. Something terribly harsh and brutal goes on in Cuban prisons.

Hunger, alienation, the guards’ willingness to beat up prisoners who in many cases do not deserve it—the prisoners become so alienated that they turn to self-mutilation. I saw two people make a hot paste by melting plastic shopping bags, and then put their hands inside this substance. They lost their hands, which were amputated, and were released on medical parole. Other people stab themselves; swallow wires, small spoons; take fluids that are harmful to their digestive system. To sum it up, it’s a world of horror.

After being jailed for a year, I was transferred to the Guantánamo Provincial Hospital. This happened a year after I had been requesting adequate medical attention. During the time I spent at the hospital, conditions improved. I would receive the hospital’s food, and there

was a snack. I was like any other patient, except that I remained jailed at a ward for prisoners, living with common prisoners, which was not easy. But at least there was more ventilation.

SGR: How was your relationship with other prisoners?

JOC: You have to apply a lot of psychology. You may get stabbed, because they traffic in pills and prisoners get high, particularly in Guantánamo. There’s also trafficking in knives. They make them at the prison and sell them for cigarettes. Fights also break out, and you may be wounded—that’s very common. It’s a very difficult coexistence. I didn’t have any problems with common prisoners, but it’s a potential problem, particularly for political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Cuba.

SGR: What medical problems did you suffer?

JOC: I suffer from a colon disorder, and I need to avoid stress. The pain in my lower abdomen is terrible, and I may have bouts of diarrhea. All of this upsets my nerves, and it becomes a vicious cycle because then I have another crisis. I also suffered from high blood pressure, apparently because of stress and the harsh conditions. Like I said, I barely caught any sunlight during all the time I was jailed. When I was at the hospital, I would ask my guards, “Please, handcuff me and take me outdoors.” But they would reply,

“No, no, because of security concerns.” So I would talk to the doctor and I would tell the guards they should give me at least an hour outdoors, and sometimes the guards would give me an hour, or half an hour, or nothing.

SGR: Were you aware of the international protests over the imprisonments?

JOC: You don’t know how important it is for a political prisoner, for a prisoner of conscience to feel and see through your family and through phone calls what people were doing. We were desperate. I would ask my relatives what CPJ was doing, what Reporters Without Borders was doing, what the Inter American Press Association was doing, what Amnesty International was doing, what many other people, including politicians and people of good will, were doing.

That was very important from a spiritual point of view, to strengthen ourselves in those conditions and endure them. And this should not let up; it’s crucial for those journalists who are still in jail in conditions similar to those I have described. Their minds may be affected and so their bodies may be.

One thing I know for sure: I’ll never renounce my principles. I will always support a plural, inclusive society wherever I am.

SGR: How did your family cope during your imprisonment?

JOC: If you suffer in jail, your family suffers much more. Here, I have only my wife and my two children. My wife had to solve every problem and take care of the family—and she never stopped caring about me and denouncing all the injustices against me. Because of the distance to the prison, sometimes my family struggled to buy the transportation fare. They also struggled to provide for themselves, and bring things to me despite such a long trip. But my family stuck together.

SGR: What is your view on the government crackdown and everything that has happened since?

JOC: I don’t think the crackdown was very successful. The international reaction has been very strong, massive, and sustained. I think the government underestimated that, and it has caused the government to lose a very large amount of prestige. The independent press has moved forward, and so have the trade unions, political parties, and human rights activists. So, I believe that in political terms the government hasn’t won anything.

However, the language of confrontation persists and this is very dangerous. We can’t rule out that the govern-



Nancy Alfaya comforts Gisela Delgado, wife of dissident Hector Palacios, in front of the Havana courthouse in April 2003, as they learn that their husbands have been sentenced to prison.

AP /Jose Golia

ment won’t take drastic measures, although smaller in scale. They could imprison three, four persons every few months, and it wouldn’t draw international attention.

SGR: Do you feel inhibited from working as a journalist again?

JOC: I have a refugee visa and I’m not a healthy person. I’m thinking about my family. I have been 12 years, including those two in prison, trying to create a space and I think we have been successful in establishing an independent press, a cornerstone of a future democracy. It’s been 12 years I have invested in this, and now I have to think about my family, my children.

SGR: What are your plans for the future?

JOC: I think one day I’ll be able to leave Cuba. I don’t know how I’m going to do in the United States; I don’t know whether I will settle there permanently. I would like to keep writing, working as a television editor, but I know it won’t be easy. First I want to protect my family, my children, and above all, I want to cope better with my illness. One thing I do know for sure: I’ll never renounce my principles. I will always support a plural, inclusive society wherever I am. Nobody should be discriminated against because of his or her ideology. And all ideological lines should have their own media, their own way of expressing ideas and sharing them with other people. I will always defend these ideas. I took them up one day, haven’t renounced them, and never will—let alone now. ■

Crackdown on the Independent Press

More than 100 prominent Latin American journalists and writers have joined CPJ in calling for the release of the many Cuban journalists still imprisoned. For updates on CPJ’s campaign to free these journalists, visit “Crackdown on the Independent Press in Cuba” at www.cpj.org.



After the December 2004 tsunami, Arko Datta photographed many heartbreaking moments, such as this Indian couple mourning the death of their 8-year-old son.

Under Stress

News organizations step up help for journalists who encounter trauma.

By Elisabeth Witchel

Daily News photographer David Handschuh was shooting through the haze and horror of the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center when the south tower collapsed, blowing him down the block and burying him in debris. While his badly broken leg required months of recuperation, he is “still dealing with what I paid witness to that day.”

On assignment in south India after the December 2004 tsunami, Reuters photographer Arko Datta was stopped short by the sight of a young boy clinging to his dead mother. Experienced as he was in covering disasters, that awful memory lingers.

Working for months in Iraq, *New York Times* reporter Jeff Gettleman felt the grinding toll of seeing bodies blown apart in the suicide bombings and violent attacks that became part of everyday life. “You have access there,” Gettleman said, “to things you shouldn’t see.”

News organizations and journalism groups are beginning to widely acknowledge that many photographers, reporters, and cameramen do not come away from such trauma-filled assignments emotionally unscathed. New research, including a study released in April, found three in 10 journalists suffer post-traumatic stress after working on

dangerous assignments. Depression, anxiety, alcoholism, and relationship problems have also been reported.

Media organizations have long made counseling available to staffers, but analysts say newsrooms have been slow in adopting the extensive trauma support and training long used by other “first-response” organizations such as medical care and disaster relief agencies.

Now, several large news companies say they have begun more sophisticated and proactive programs to support staffers exposed to trauma. Many of these efforts have

Journalists in Iraq experienced three life-threatening events in the first weeks of coverage.

been accelerated in the past four years, after the 9/11 attacks, the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq drove home the vulnerabilities of journalists. The most ambitious programs go beyond standard offers of counseling to include pre- and post-assignment briefings for staffers, trauma awareness training for news managers, time off for journalists returning from the field, and in-the-field counseling.

Elisabeth Witchel is CPJ’s journalist assistance program coordinator.

But more can be done. These efforts have yet to spread through the entire news industry or to many parts of the world. Freelancers are often left on their own. And in a deadline-driven field, where personal detachment is considered a virtue, there is still little space in newsroom culture for journalists dealing with trauma.

Hard-drinking, swaggering, divorced war correspondents may be a common stereotype, but proof of their existence was largely anecdotal until 2002 when the *American Journal of Psychiatry* published a study led by Anthony Feinstein of the University of Toronto. The study of 140 combat journalists—titled “A Hazardous Profession: War, Journalists, and Psychopathology”—concluded that nearly 30 percent of the participants showed serious signs of post-traumatic stress. They were not likely to get treatment, either.

Feinstein released a follow-up study in April that focused on journalists covering the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Collecting data in July 2003 from embedded and unilateral journalists, he concluded that a third were psychologically distressed. Using a mean, Feinstein said that participants experienced three life-threatening events in the first weeks of war coverage.

The 24-hour news cycle—and the technology that has made it possible to relay news and images instantly—has exposed journalists to greater risks.

“Feinstein’s [2002] study was very important to this issue. There was really nothing before that,” said Santiago Lyon, director of photography at The Associated Press. Lyon, a veteran war photographer who covered conflicts in El Salvador, the Balkans, the first Gulf War, Afghanistan, and Somalia, has grappled with post-traumatic stress himself and has seen it among his staffers. “In recent years, media organizations have gotten much better at helping journalists cope with stress and trauma.”

In February, prompted by a request from a veteran war correspondent, *The New York Times* began a program to help journalists in the field cope more effectively. It includes trauma briefings for editors and news managers; a hotline for journalists’ families; and pre-assignment and exit briefings for all staffers working in high-risk areas.

The British Broadcasting Company, using recommendations from the British Ministry of Defense, has put its emphasis on management. A program launched in fall 2004 aims to train all BBC managers, team leaders, and editors

responsible for at-risk staff to recognize when a journalist is having difficulties and offer peer support, said Dipti Patel, occupational health physician for the BBC.

Five years ago, after the killing of Reuters correspondent Kurt Schork in Sierra Leone had deeply affected his colleagues, the news agency stepped up efforts to teach managers how to recognize and cope with trauma, according to Global Managing Editor David Schlesinger. “The main problem for us,” he said, “has been getting past the idea that journalists are tough and macho and to get them to recognize that it is OK to talk about their problems.” Schlesinger said Reuters’ staffers talk more frequently now with professional counselors and their colleagues.

Other organizations that have strengthened support efforts include National Public Radio, which offers counseling and time off to all journalists returning from danger zones, and the AP, which began offering staffers international access to counselors.

Addressing job-related trauma is imperative at a time when professional demands and dangers are higher than ever, Handschuh said. “There’s a cumulative effect to what we witness—and add to that the 24-hour news cycle.”

“Covering the tsunami was like going through an emotional roller-coaster,” said Datta, whose photographs of devastated south India appeared in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Economist*. Datta said the experience did not differ much from other disasters, all of which “are difficult to cover logistically and emotionally,” but noted that he came across several scenes that stopped him in his tracks. “Having lost my mother recently, watching a particular instance of people trying to pull away a boy clinging on to his dead mother, was too painful for me.”

Iraq—where 41 journalists have been killed and 30 abducted as of April—poses basic survival risks. “Every day in Iraq, I was nostalgic for Afghanistan,” said Gettleman, of *The New York Times*, who covered the U.S.-led attack on Afghanistan in 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Iraq. “Even though Afghanistan had dangers, journalists were not targets.” Gettleman was abducted in Iraq and held by gunmen for a day in April 2004. “The stress that puts you and everyone working around you under is enormous,” he said.

AP’s Lyon said the 24-hour news cycle—and the technology that has made it possible to relay news and images instantly—has exposed journalists to greater risk for longer, unbroken periods. Journalists in prior conflicts had to file from offices or other serene settings; digital photography and satellite communication now both allow and encourage them to file from the scene. Factor in the continuous news cycle, and journalists are never truly off deadline.

Attitudes about trauma are slowly changing, said Roger Simpson, executive director of the Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma at the University of Washington. “A



When the south tower of the World Trade Center collapsed, *Daily News* photographer David Handschuh was badly injured. The memories of that day have stayed with him.

decade ago,” he said, “we sometimes met hostile responses from corporate personnel people. That almost never happens today.”

But counseling alone is not enough, Simpson said. “Management often fails to create a climate of support and respect for counseling among their journalists,” he said. And while a handful of “leaders in the industry” are promoting better trauma management, Simpson said, those practices have yet to spread throughout the news business.

Simpson said everyone in a news operation should receive training about safety and trauma, and editors should ensure that they are in touch with every journalist in a dangerous situation, as well as their families. After media workers complete assignments, a formal program to continue discussion should be made available. Dart also cautions against sending journalists back into dangerous assignments too soon.

Freelance journalists remain at particular risk. “They don’t have much support and they risk a lot in war and conflict situations,” Simpson said. “There is a huge need for this underserved group.”

Freelance journalists typically find it harder to secure affordable counseling than do staff journalists. Some freelancers can obtain counseling through their own health insurance plans, if the plans are broad enough to cover such issues. But only a handful of media organizations help freelancers cover the costs of such insurance.

Across the world, local journalists in conflict zones face extraordinary stress and personal danger. CPJ has tracked several cases in which these local journalists received help for emotional scars only after relocating to safer places. Sri Lankan journalist Dharma Lingham, whose life was threatened after he exposed human rights abuses by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, said he noticed symptoms of psychological distress only after he left the country.

Not only do journalists suppress trauma to survive, in many of the world’s troubled places, help is simply not available. “As far as I know there is no concept of counseling for post-traumatic stress,” said Owais Aslam Ali, secretary general of the Pakistan Press Foundation. “Close family structure in our society may help a bit, but it is not a substitute for professional counseling.”

In the United States, however, work-related trauma, once mentioned in hushed tones, is being addressed more regularly in public. At its annual conference this year, Military Reporters and Editors (MRE), a U.S.-based association, will feature a panel on the subject for the first time.

The Nieman Foundation has also chosen trauma as the theme of its two-day conference this October. “There is a great responsibility to learn from the research out there,” said Stefanie Friedhoff, a freelance journalist and organizer of the conference co-sponsored by the Dart Center. “If almost a third [of journalists] come back with trauma, we have to do something about it.” ■

Reuters cameraman Bassam Masoud is wounded during clashes between Palestinian and Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip town of Rafa.



A Turkish journalist raises his handcuffed hands during a March protest against the country's new, vaguely worded penal code.

1 2 3 4 5

Eight Grave Threats to Press Freedom

Compiled by Amanda Watson-Boles



Guards staff the gate of Cuba's Combinado Del Este where journalists are jailed for antistate activities.

AP/Jose Colita

Reuters/Khalil Hamra

A journalist's murder makes headlines for good reason. Killings, especially those that go unpunished, pose a terrible threat to a free press. Other threats are more subtle—legal manipulation, indifference to safety, indirect censorship—but they are debilitating in their own way. Based on the Committee to Protect Journalists' work worldwide, here is our assessment of the eight grave threats to press freedom today.

Killers Go Free

In the last decade, more than 250 journalists have been murdered for their work—often to prevent them from reporting on corruption or human rights abuses, or to punish them after they have done so. In more than 85 percent of these cases, CPJ found, the killers went unpunished. At least 60 victims were threatened beforehand.

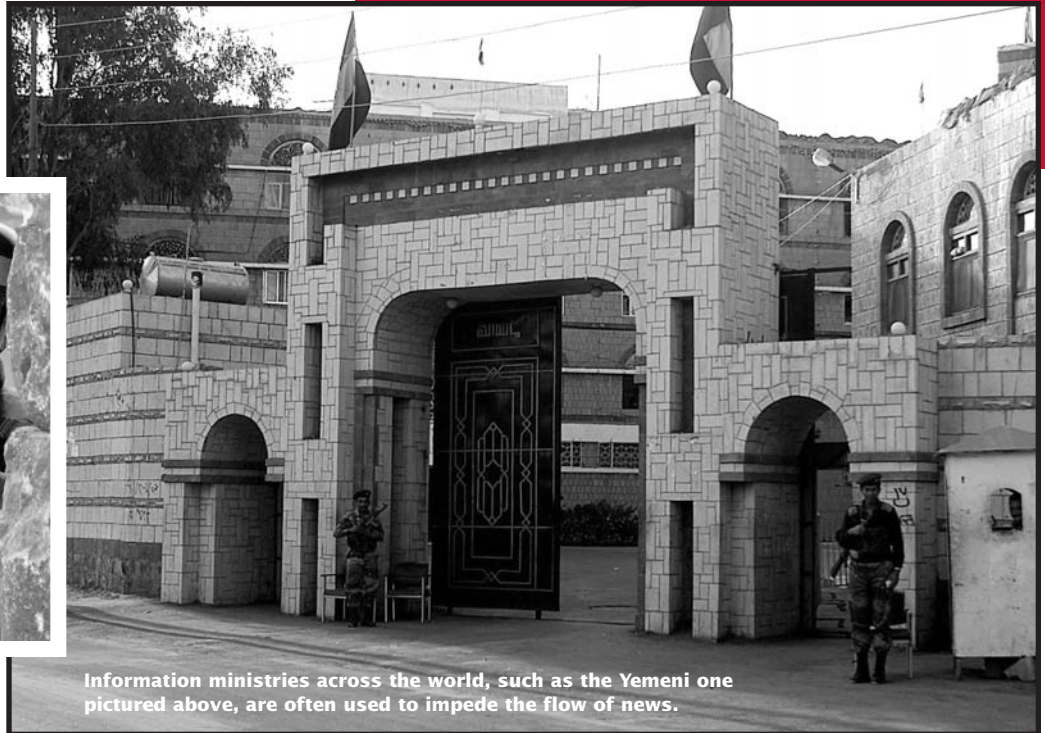
Amanda Watson-Boles, CPJ's former senior editor, is a copy editor at Slate magazine.

5 6 7 8

Photojournalist Mazen Dana was killed in Iraq when his camera was mistaken for a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.



Reuters/Nayef Hashlamoun



Information ministries across the world, such as the Yemeni one pictured above, are often used to impede the flow of news.

Reuters/Aladin Abdel Naby

This deadly cycle is reinforced every time another journalist is attacked with no response from authorities. The culture of impunity is most visible—and most shocking—in the Philippines, where at least 48 journalists have been killed for their work since 1986. No one has been convicted in any of the cases.

The situation can be changed. After a campaign organized by the media and citizens, Mozambique brought to justice the killers of reporter Carlos Cardoso, who was murdered in 2000. And in the Ukraine, sustained public scrutiny of the unsolved 2000 killing of Internet journalist Georgy Gongadze helped bring about progress in the long-stalled murder probe.

Conflict Made Riskier

In conflict zones, journalists can be deliberately targeted or killed in crossfire. Deliberately targeting civilians, including members of the press, is a war crime, and any failure to properly investigate and prosecute offenders only encourages more violence.

In many cases, journalists are put at risk in combat zones because of the apparent use of reckless or indiscriminate force by soldiers. In Iraq, U.S. forces' fire has killed at least nine journalists, including CPJ International Press Freedom Award recipient Mazen Dana. A soldier said he mistook the camera on Dana's shoulder for a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

While war zones will always be dangerous, all militaries should take steps to reduce the danger for journalists. To the extent possible, commanders should ensure that soldiers in the field are aware when and where journalists are working. Military rules of engagement should take into account journalists' presence. When a death does occur, militaries must conduct timely and credible investigations and take action in cases of misconduct.

'Antistate' Laws Used to Silence

By the end of 2004, laws banning "antistate" activity landed 74 journalists behind bars worldwide. Allegations of antistate activity were made in 14 additional cases in which formal charges were not made public, CPJ found. These laws address activities such as subversion, sedition, divulging state secrets, and acting against the interests of the state—but time after time in these cases, the laws were used to silence journalists critical of their governments.

While countries have the right to prosecute citizens for treason, espionage, or revealing state secrets, many antistate statutes are ill-defined—or not defined at all. Bangladesh and Russia prohibit "antistate activities" and "antistate propaganda" respectively, but offer no definitions—empowering authorities to prosecute journalists who criticize the government or officials.

The world's leading jailers of journalists, Cuba and China, use this tactic most frequently. Thirty-three Chinese journalists were imprisoned at the end of 2004 on various "antistate" charges. In Cuba, 23 journalists were placed behind bars on similarly vague charges.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Defamation as a Crime

Governments wield criminal libel statutes throughout the world—from Indonesia, where some of the nation's top editors have been targeted with criminal charges, to Panama, where almost half the press corps has been in criminal court. At least nine journalists were imprisoned on criminal defamation charges by the end of 2004, CPJ found, but the threat is more insidious than any statistic can demonstrate. Journalists claim the mere threat of a criminal conviction is enough to cause widespread self-censorship.

Seeking the repeal of these repressive laws is fundamental to a free press. In Latin America, a long-term advocacy campaign led to two seminal rulings in 2004 by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that should make it harder to criminally prosecute journalists. The rulings bolster international law, which increasingly supports civil penalties as adequate redress.

Censorship's Subtle Hand

Censorship, while still overt in a few countries, has developed more subtle and insidious forms. Uzbekistan lifted official prior censorship in 2001 but shifted the burden of “responsibility” to newspaper editors, many of whom hired former government censors to cleanse their copy of offending news.

In Middle Eastern countries such as Jordan and Algeria, editors often receive phone calls from security services “advising” journalists what to print and what to avoid. In Uzbekistan, the state daily *Pravda Vostoka* (Truth of the East) fired journalist Sergei Yezhkov in January 2004 after he wrote several articles about corruption and social problems and participated in an international conference on press freedom.

Information ministries often serve as the government's linchpin of repression, carefully prescribing the media's work and meting out harsh punishments when journalists cross the line. The Saudi Arabian Information Ministry has banned columnists critical of the government from writing. Liberia's ministry carefully censored all coverage of the recent civil war there. In Belarus, the Information Ministry shuttered independent newspapers whose coverage exposed government malfeasance.

A Profession Divided

Journalistic factions can intensify threats of repression. In Bangladesh, where scores of journalists have been violently targeted in recent years, the media is sharply divided between the country's two main political parties. Divided media sometimes fail to hold the respective parties accountable for attacks—fostering a climate in which violence can continue.

Persistent ethnic tensions in Afghanistan have left journalists unable to unite behind a single professional union. Efforts to form a coalition broke down in 2003, leaving the three journalists' unions battling each other instead of enemies of the free press.

And in Argentina, the national press freedom group *Periodistas*, which had united journalists and supported press freedom for almost a decade, dissolved amid internal differences in 2004. Local observers say reporters in the country's interior, which had been supported by these prominent journalists, will suffer from the group's disbanding.

Licenses, Rules Used to Repress

Repressive regimes use bureaucratic statutes to deny critical media outlets the right to publish or broadcast. In Zimbabwe, the country's Media and Information Commission uses regulatory requirements to limit the operations of independent newspapers such as the *Weekly Times*. In late February, after only eight weeks of publication, the *Weekly Times* was shut down on a technicality—a bid by the commission to clamp down on the opposition press before the scheduled March elections.

In countries with a modicum of press freedom, officials also create bureaucratic excuses to keep critical outlets shuttered. For the third year in a row, Armenian authorities denied a broadcasting license to the independent TV channel A1+, a consistent critic of the president.

Public Information Kept Secret

People need access to the basic details of public life to make thoughtful decisions about their governments. But in the post-9/11 world, ready access to information is becoming more difficult. Even the United States has reclassified entire swaths of information once considered public and has made other records arduous and time-consuming to obtain.

One hopeful sign came in 2003, when Mexico passed a law allowing citizens to both request information about public officials' salaries, government contracts, internal reports, and the use of public money, and punish those officials who refuse to comply. The law is not perfect—some information can be held for up to 12 years—but it is a positive step that has allowed vital stories to come to light. ■

Rebels and Reporters

For the Kremlin, the Chechen war has two flanks.

By Alex Lupis
With reporting by
Sophia Kishkovsky



AP Photo/Musa Sadulayev

A Russian helicopter flies above the Chechen village of Benoi. Russian policies have severely restricted press coverage of the conflict, leaving the public uninformed.

Along with its bloody, six-year-old conflict with Chechen separatists, the Kremlin has waged a brutally effective information war using repressive policies, restrictive rules, subtle censorship, and outright attacks on journalists, a year-long analysis by the Committee to Protect Journalists has found. This ongoing governmental campaign, CPJ research shows, has included dozens of serious cases of harassment, threats, abduction, obstruction, and assaults against journalists since the second Chechen war began in August 1999.

The campaign has suppressed independent reporting and obscured the conflict's steadily rising death toll, which is now well into the tens of thousands. The sort of critical news coverage that weakened the Russian public's support for the first Chechen war a decade ago—including reports of civilian casualties and human rights violations by Russian forces—has been virtually erased from national television and significantly curtailed in other domestic and international media during the current conflict.

"Ask the average person on the street what they know about Chechnya and they will say there are bandits there, a water park is being built, and Ksenia Sobchak comes to visit in a miniskirt," said Oleg Panfilov, director of the Moscow-based Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, describing pervasively superficial reporting that mixes war coverage with feel-good doses of a club-hopping socialite.

President Vladimir Putin, the former Federal Security Service (FSB) chief who took office in 1999, has been a beneficiary of this two-front war. The Kremlin has burnished

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his image as a strong leader while demonizing the Chechen rebels as terrorists. "Chechnya is the president's personal project," said Aleksei Venediktov, editor-in-chief of the independent radio station Ekho Moskvy. "He chose the model of dealing with it—the 'Chechenization' of the conflict, pitting 'good' Chechens against 'bad' Chechens."

From the onset of the second war, the Media Ministry prohibited the major Russian television networks from airing interviews or footage of the militant leaders and blocked most newspaper coverage of the rebel leadership. The ban was the first sign that the Kremlin would not tolerate a repetition of the Russian media's role in influencing public opinion in its battle with separatists. During the first campaign in 1994-96, independent broadcast media such as NTV showed graphic images of the enormous human losses, while reporters risked their lives to present the Chechen side of the story.

But in 1999, few Russian journalists successfully resisted the Media Ministry's interview rules or the Russian military's severe travel restrictions. Only approved journalists are permitted into the war zone—and only accompanied by a military escort.

"During the first war, journalists basically just got their accreditation and had complete freedom of movement throughout Chechnya," said Lyoma Turpalov, editor-in-chief of *Groznensky Rabochy*, which is based in the neighboring republic of Ingushetia. "Now you can only go with a military escort, access to interviewing civilians is totally restricted ... and journalists are very vulnerable, so they are forced to censor themselves."

Musa Muradov, a Chechen journalist working for the independent Moscow daily *Kommersant*, said many journalists are torn between their desire to report objectively on the conflict and their desire to avoid state persecution.

“The picture of developments in Chechnya is poor because it is difficult to talk to representatives of the other side ... and if you do it, it’s hard to present their point of view because you will be seen as helping terrorists,” Muradov said. “So most Russians are limited to reading and watching news that is coming from official sources.”

State media often exploit Russians’ historical animosity toward Chechens. “Russians think of ‘bandits,’ ‘terrorists,’ and ‘separatists’ when they think of Chechens—and the government tries to solidify this image on RTR and NTV,” Turpalov said, referring to the state-controlled national television channels. “They always emphasize when a crime suspect is Chechen.”

This antipathy, coupled with widespread war fatigue among Russians, has left little public thirst for inquisitive reporting. “The public is simply tired of this war,” said Yuri Bagrov, a journalist based in North Ossetia who has reported for The Associated Press and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Only when violence spills into another republic, he said, is public apathy shaken.

Press officers at the Kremlin and the FSB did not respond to written questions submitted by CPJ seeking comment on their media policies. Publicly, the Kremlin justifies travel restrictions by pointing to the reporters who were kidnapped by criminal groups during Chechnya’s period of de facto independence from 1996 to 1999. Yet Russian forces have themselves targeted journalists during this second war.

Andrei Babitsky, a Russian covering Chechnya for RFE/RL, found himself in the Kremlin’s crosshairs after disobeying travel restrictions. Babitsky disappeared in mid-January 2000 while on assignment in the Chechen capital, Grozny. After two weeks of Kremlin denials—and growing international pressure—officials in Moscow admitted that Russian forces were holding the reporter in a nearby detention camp. Several more weeks of confusion and contradictory reports followed, during which Russian soldiers handed Babitsky over to a group of Chechen rebels, then planted false identity papers on him and arrested him. When Babitsky was finally released at the end of February 2000, the Kremlin called him a traitor for reporting on military operations.

In a more mysterious case in July 2003, unidentified gunmen seized Agence France-Presse correspondent Ali Astamirov just outside Nazran, the capital of Ingushetia. Before he disappeared, Astamirov had endured months of police and FSB harassment. No ransom was ever requested, and local journalists and human rights activists told CPJ they suspected that security forces loyal to the Kremlin were responsible. The government has dismissed such speculation, but has reported no progress in solving the disappearance.

“During the second war, bureaucrats and the security services became much more interested in journalists like Babitsky

Cold War Tactics

Drugging and Detention: Beslan cases reminiscent of Soviet practices.

By Sophia Kishkovsky

With reporting by Alex Lupis

MOSCOW

Georgian television reporter Nana Lezhava spent three brutal days covering the horrors of the Beslan school siege, interviewing grief-stricken families and trying to find some truth amid the dizzying array of official deception. Yet her own ordeal was just about to begin.

On September 4, the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor agency to the KGB, detained Lezhava and cameraman Levan Tetvadze on a specious border viola-

tion for five days. Lezhava was interrogated, tried, subjected to an involuntary gynecological exam, and slipped a dose of a psychotropic drug.

“They asked me if I taste cognac in the coffee,” she said in a recent interview, matter-of-factly recounting details that seemed drawn from a Cold War-era spy novel. “They said they gave some to me because I was so cold. I don’t remember anything after that. When

I came to, it was 24 hours later and I was in an FSB detention cell.”

The government’s use of *spetsoperatsii*—covert, KGB-style special operations—to silence independent journalists has become a disturbing development in today’s Russia, especially when it comes to the conflict in Chechnya. Nowhere was the practice more evident than

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Nana Lezhava returns to Georgia after five days of detention in Russia, during which she was interrogated and drugged.

in the North Ossetian town of Beslan; more than a dozen journalists reported being obstructed or detained while trying to cover the deadly hostage crisis there.

Among journalists, poisonings and bogus detentions bring to mind Soviet-era cases such as the notorious 1978 murder of exiled Bulgarian writer Georgi Markov, who was felled in London by a hit man firing a poison pellet from an umbrella. Investigators said the KGB helped Bulgarian agents carry out the assassination. Eight years later, Soviet agents planted secret documents on Nicholas Daniloff, Moscow correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*, and then detained him for two weeks while they bargained for the release of a Soviet agent being held in New York.

The FSB and the Kremlin did not respond to written questions submitted by the Committee to Protect Journalists about Lezhava or other Beslan cases.

Reporting for Rustavi-2, Lezhava and Tetvadze crossed the border on September 1 without difficulty and soon went on the air with a live feed, saying that the number of hostages was around 1,400—a figure far higher and more accurate than the official estimate of 354.

By September 4, after the crisis had exploded in violence that left hundreds dead, Lezhava and other journalists were interviewing hysterical relatives who were desperate to cut through the bureaucratic chaos and learn whether their missing children were dead or alive. An observer who identified himself as an employee of the Russian Foreign Ministry, which accredits journalists for work in Russia and keeps track of their coverage, singled out Lezhava.

“He told me, ‘You are a very active lady,’” she recalled, an observation that still surprises her. “I can’t imagine a journalist who is not active. What kind of journalist are you if you are not active and interested in what is happening?”

The ministry representative summoned the FSB. Lezhava and Tetvadze were detained—first in Beslan and then in Vladikavkaz—and their camera, phones, cassettes, microphone, and other equipment were seized. They were accused of illegally crossing the border. While Georgians and Russians need visas to visit each other, Lezhava and Tetvadze are registered in Kazbegi, a Georgian border district whose residents carry passport inserts known as *vkladyshi* that give them the right to spend 10 days in Russia without a visa.

But in the custody of the FSB, Lezhava said, “The inserts simply disappeared. They took them and stole them.” So the two were tried on the border violation and Lezhava’s medical exam was administered, she said, on the pretense that it was required before entering an FSB prison. Lezhava remembers little after being drugged, which apparently happened when seemingly solicitous security agents served her coffee and sandwiches.

By September 8, amid a growing international outcry, an FSB general came from Moscow. Apologies were made, a television camera brought in, and the two were instructed to say that they hadn’t been tortured or hurt. Lezhava and Tetvadze were allowed to pay a fine and taken to the border where Georgian officials met them.

Lezhava was examined by doctors upon her return to Tbilisi. Gela Lezhava, chairman of the supervisory board of the Narcology Research Institute, said traces of a drug



Mourners weep over the coffins of hostages killed in the Beslan school siege.

AP/Ivan Sekretarev

from the benzodiazepine group were found in her system, the Kavkasia-Press news agency reported. Georgia's Health and Social Security Minister Lado Chipashvili also said traces of a psychotropic substance were present.

Lezhava was hospitalized for five days and suffered from frequent headaches. When she recounted the events in a telephone interview six months later, she was working again and had just returned from an assignment in the Pankissi Gorge enclave between Chechnya and Georgia, where she reported on Chechen refugees' reactions to the killing of rebel leader Aslan Maskhadov by Russian security forces.

C PJ and others have documented additional cases of obstruction and retaliation involving Beslan. Amr Abdul Hamid, Moscow bureau chief of the Dubai-based satellite television channel Al-Arabiya, was detained while returning from Beslan; Raf Shakirov, editor-in-chief of the leading daily *Izvestia*, was forced out after his paper's critical coverage of the siege. But the cases of two prominent war correspondents, Andrei Babitsky and Anna Politkovskaya, have drawn particular attention.

Babitsky, the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist famous for his coverage of Chechnya, was pulled off a September 2 flight that was to have taken him from the Vnukovo Airport to Mineralniye Vody. He then planned to travel on to Beslan.

But Babitsky was told traces of explosives were found on his checked luggage. By the time the luggage was reinspected and cleared, the flight had left and two young strangers had come upon the scene. The men demanded Babitsky buy them beer and followed him when he refused. When voices were raised, the airport police descended and detained Babitsky on a charge of "hooliganism."

While all three were in custody, Babitsky recalled in an interview, the men acknowledged that they worked for the airport's parking-lot security and had been instructed by a security chief to provoke a fight. Babitsky, who eventually paid a fine of about \$34, never made it to Beslan. He describes the whole episode as "very Soviet in character."

The case of Anna Politkovskaya is more mysterious. The *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper reporter, whose searing stories about Chechnya have won her international acclaim, was also on her way to Beslan on September 2. After drinking tea on a flight to Rostov-on-Don, Politkovskaya became violently ill and lost consciousness. She, too, never made it to the school siege, although the cause of her illness has not been determined.

Politkovskaya has declined to talk about her case, but *Novaya Gazeta* Editor Dmitry Muratov said he is convinced she was poisoned to prevent her from getting to Beslan. "All these cases," Muratov said ruefully, "are very strange." ■

and Astamirov," Bagrov said. "What happened to them was a lesson to others that it's not worth it to do your job."

A Moscow-based Western correspondent, who said he travels covertly to Chechnya to report on the war, called security conditions appalling for everyone. "It's completely lawless. People are still disappearing at night at the hands of armed men," said the journalist, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, citing safety concerns.

Local journalists living in and around Chechnya also face intense bureaucratic harassment and obstruction. "It's a problem getting the most basic information from government officials," said Timur Aliyev, editor-in-chief of *Chechenskoye Obshchestvo*, which is based in Ingushetia for security reasons. But access to information is just one problem for the independent weekly; local officials angered by its reporting on abuses by Russian forces have waged an ongoing campaign of bureaucratic pressure and censorship against the newspaper.

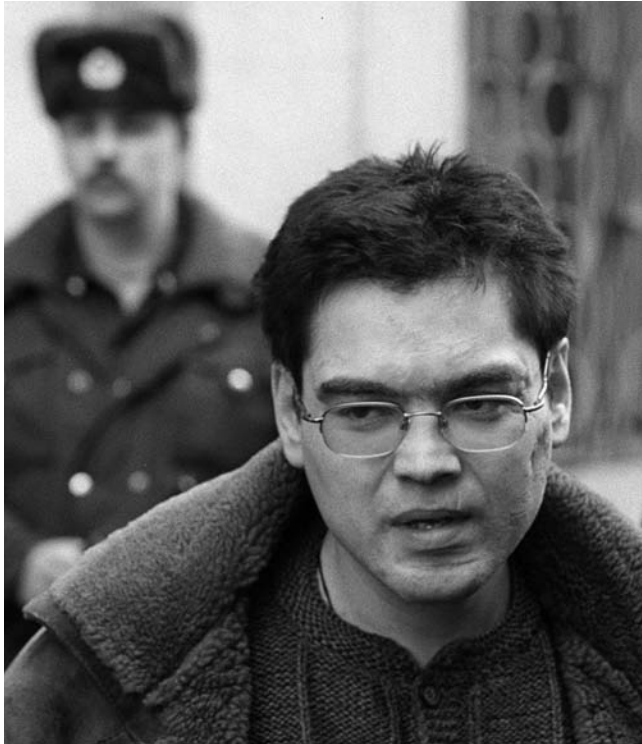
Authorities in Ingushetia, complying with a request from Chechnya's Interior Ministry, shut *Chechenskoye Obshchestvo* for the month prior to Chechnya's August 2004 presidential elections. The government newspaper distributor cancelled the newspaper's contract, making for "a very complicated situation," Aliyev said.

Journalists from other parts of Russia also face great scrutiny. In January, the FSB launched a criminal investigation of *Pravo-Zashchita*, an independent newspaper based in the Volga River city of Nizhny Novgorod, after it published remarks by rebel leader Aslan Maskhadov and his envoy, Akhmed Zakayev, that called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Federal authorities issued an official warning to *Kommersant* for publishing an interview with Maskhadov in February. The next month, Russian forces killed Maskhadov.

The tactics in Chechnya reflect the Kremlin's overall media strategy, which employs nearly a dozen government agencies at local, national, and international levels to stifle criticism. Television is a focal point.

"When Putin came to power he knew exactly what he wanted to do, and that was to control national television," said Masha Lipman, an analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Center. National television is far and away the dominant source of news for Russians. Lipman said that projecting an image of strength and stability on TV screens nationwide is central to Putin's political strategy—to the point of becoming an end in itself.

A series of political appointments to the country's influential state broadcasters, Channel One (ORT) and RTR, have ensured pro-Putin editorial policies. Independent stations have been shuttered by the government or swallowed up by pro-government businesses. The state gas monopoly Gazprom carried out a hostile takeover of national television channel NTV in 2001. A court order



AP/Maxim Marmur

Radio journalist Andrei Babitsky speaks to the media after being questioned by Russian investigators in 2000. Babitsky was detained by Russian forces and called a traitor while reporting in Chechnya.

closed TV-6 in 2002, and the Media Ministry pulled TV5 off the air in 2003.

“It’s because of television’s big role in ensuring (former President) Boris Yeltsin’s re-election in 1996 that the Kremlin is so concerned about what is on the television screens,” said Andrei Shylov, a reporter on NTV’s popular Sunday news program “Namedni” until it was yanked off the air in 2004 in response to Kremlin pressure. In quick succession that year, the Kremlin purged national television of virtually every substantive current affairs show and independent-minded news host.

The Kremlin has long tried to shape international news coverage by denying visas and accreditation to foreign correspondents, but in recent months it has stepped up pressure on foreign governments as well. Russian diplomats have pressed several Baltic and Central European countries to shut down the pro-Chechen news Web site *KavkazCenter*, which the Kremlin calls a “terrorist” site even though both Western and Russian journalists rely on it as one of the few sources of breaking news from the region.

In February, Russian diplomats unsuccessfully urged British authorities to censor an interview with rebel leader Shamil Basayev on the independent television station Channel 4. The next month, they criticized the Swedish government for allowing the independent news agency TT to publish an interview with Basayev.

These restrictive policies have led to widespread public ignorance about the crime, government corruption, military incompetence, and human rights abuses that plague government efforts in Chechnya. The September 2004 hostage-taking in Beslan surprised many Russians, who had been told by the country’s three state-controlled national television channels that life in the republic was returning to normal.

“The media are an important political instrument for the government ...but trust in the media is falling and I don’t think the Kremlin is paying attention to this at all,” said Olga Karabanova, director of the Moscow-based Press Development Institute.

Shylov offered a similar view. “People no longer see television as a source of information,” he said. “People who read newspapers and the Internet know that on television you get the official line.”

Putin’s tactics raise broader questions about his willingness to tackle sensitive issues such as government corruption, human rights abuses, organized crime, AIDS, and the trafficking of drugs, weapons, and humans. “The lack of accountability is a big problem,” Lipman said. “In the short run, Putin has politics, but not the country, under his control.”

For his part, Babitsky said that “these are not Soviet times” and that the press still has some latitude for criticism of the government. But he added, “We don’t know how far Putin is ready to go, and the distance he’s gone is significant.” The damage now is not measured by “closed newspapers or closed political parties,” Babitsky said, but by the number of dead in Chechnya—the terrible cost of a story that goes untold in Russia. ■

Chechnya by the Numbers

Since the second Chechen war began in 1999, CPJ has documented dozens of cases of press abuse. Many more abuses go unreported, often because journalists are fearful that publicity will draw unwanted government attention. Here is a numerical snapshot of the worst cases involving journalists, as documented by CPJ staff.

Deaths: 7

Includes deaths in crossfire and two targeted killings blamed on rebels

Censorship, legal actions: 20

Direct government actions designed to suppress reporting

Harassment: 33

Other government actions intended to hinder reporting

Abductions: 5

Kidnappings by armed groups

Imprisonments: 8

Detentions by Russian forces or government officials

Out of the Silence

When Nepal's King Gyanendra switched off the news, reporters switched tactics.

By Kristin Jones

At 10:25 a.m. on February 1, King Gyanendra of Nepal delivered a stunning proclamation—Nepal's multi-party government had been dismissed and a state of emergency declared. Simultaneously, telephone lines across the country were cut, mobile phone service discontinued, and fax and Internet connections shut down. Backed by the Royal Nepalese Army, the king seized state television and radio, placed the country's political leaders under house arrest, and silenced the press with military occupations of major media houses and wide bans on reporting.

In the silence that followed, a surprising thing happened.

The king was unable to shut off Nepal from the rest of the world. Rather, in the days after the coup, smuggled e-mails, clandestine Web sites, and the unlikely emergence of a handful of Nepalese bloggers threw the government and independent journalists into a cat-and-mouse chase. The king's unintentional result: While attempting to plunge Nepal into a communications dark age, he spawned a small legion of online journalists.

Shortly after the announcement, Tara Nath Dahal, president of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) emerged from his home to find

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Federation of Nepalese Journalists

Bishnu Nisthuri, general secretary of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists, publicized government harassment of his colleague's family—and was arrested for his efforts.

the streets deserted. When he arrived at the umbrella organization's building, "no journalists had come to the office for fear of arrest," he said in a CPJ interview. Resolved to take a stand against the king's curtailment of Nepal's hard-won press freedom, Dahal met with FNJ General Secretary Bishnu Nisthuri and decided to risk arrest by writing a statement that would condemn the king's actions and boost the morale of his colleagues.

"The royal announcement made yesterday, by ending the spirit and value of the constitution of Nepal, is a coup against democracy and peoples' rights," the explosive first sentence read. The following morning, Dahal met with other central committee members of the FNJ and secretly printed out the statement.

Now came the hard part—distribution. Without telephone, fax, e-mail, or Internet, the statement was delivered to international nongovernmental organizations, diplomatic offices, media houses, and foreign journalists by bicycle and motorcycle couriers. Within hours, it had been photocopied countless times. Soon, it was translated into English, and, via satellite connections accessible to diplomats and foreign journalists, an electronic version appeared in in-boxes across the world.

Dahal went into hiding. When security forces surrounded his house and harassed his family, Nisthuri wrote and distributed a statement calling attention to the treatment of the FNJ president. On February 4, it was Nisthuri who was arrested.

In those initial days, the coup seemed to generate little national protest. Racked by a civil conflict between Maoist rebels and the government, Nepal had been run down by violence. Faith in political parties had been compromised by corruption. Some Nepalese believed that the king's drastic actions were in order; many feared that dissent would mean arrest. And in a poor country where only about 80,000 of 27 million citizens are regular Internet users, where illiteracy is high and phone lines don't reach large swaths of the mountains, a communications blackout isn't a life-changing event for many people.

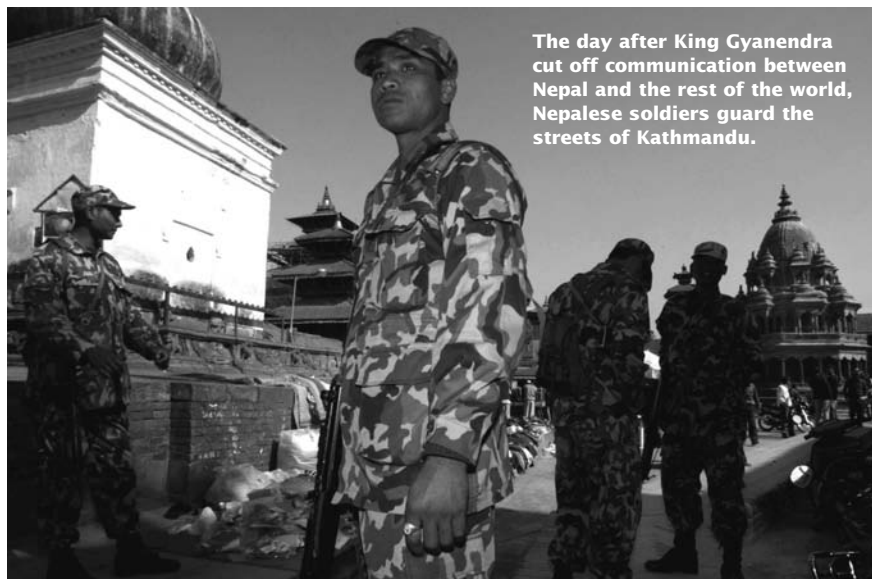
Dinesh Wagle, an arts reporter for Nepal's major daily *Kantipur* and a pioneering Nepalese blogger, was entirely absent from the blogosphere during the first week of the coup. The Internet remained down until February 8, and he lacked access to expensive satellite connections. Regardless, his *United We Blog!* (UWB, www.blog.com.np), had rarely dealt with politics. The site was primarily an English-language diary with threads on music, parties, and the media.

But when Internet communication resumed, *Kantipur* and all other media outlets were still barred from any reporting "that goes against the letter and the spirit of the royal proclamation." So, while the king's army dismantled community radio and choked dissent in the country's Nepali-language publications, the Web site posted its new motto: "*United We Blog!* wants Peace and Democracy [to] be restored in Nepal as soon as possible."

Wagle's colleagues began to see the blog in a new light, he said. "Even those folks at *Kantipur* who didn't read my blogs or simply ignored them are now following daily," he wrote in an e-mail to CPJ. "Political reporters also share info with me that they can't write in *Kantipur*." The site provided extensive, street-level coverage of political protests and reports on the arrests of colleagues. Interest soared, both inside and outside of Nepal.

The king restored communications with a caveat: security forces could monitor and block media outlets as they saw fit. Were online journalists putting themselves at risk? Wagle admitted that there were submissions he would not post—for example, statements calling for an end to the monarchy. *Radio Free Nepal*, another blog that emerged after the coup, posted comments anonymously in order to protect contributors.

By April, these two blogs had escaped direct government censorship, but other news Web sites such as the *Nepali Post*, a Washington, D.C.-based Nepali-language online magazine, had



The day after King Gyanendra cut off communication between Nepal and the rest of the world, Nepalese soldiers guard the streets of Kathmandu.

AP/Elizabeth Dalziel

been targeted. Editor Girish Pokhrel said that the government blocked the Web site in Nepal shortly after the resumption of Internet service.

Despite its resolve, the Nepalese government may not have the resources for sophisticated Internet surveillance and blocking. Pokhrel found that readers in Nepal soon accessed the site through overseas proxy servers, which retrieve Web site contents on the user's behalf. When those proxy servers were blocked, readers found new ones.

Newslook, a U.S.-based English-language Web site that culls international headlines, saw its readership in Nepal multiply by five during the month of February. Editor Dharma Adhikari, a Nepal-born journalism professor at Georgia Southern University, told CPJ that the number of hits from Nepal dropped by only 10 percent when the government blocked the site around February 23. Somehow users were finding a way to get through.

For the most part, Nepalese authorities showed greater tolerance for critical commentary in online news sources than in print publications, and allowed more freedom in English-language media than in Nepali-language media. In a country where the Internet is prohibitively expensive

and most people do not speak English, the government may not have viewed most online journalism as a threat. Internet journalists, in general, were not in a position to report on the political conflict that raged in the country's rural areas. On the other hand, the king's post-coup directives struck at the heart of community radio, a primary source of information for the many Nepalese who are illiterate. Independent newscasts were banned, and reports on the Maoist insurgency were restricted.

As Nepalese began to report electronically to the world, however, the world responded. The international outcry over the imprisonment of Nisthuri helped to win his release on February 25. Though under pressure from the government, Dahal evaded arrest and teamed with other advocates to launch the Web site *Press Freedom Nepal* (www.pressfreedomnepal.org), which posts press freedom violations and relevant news. The fight for the Internet is not over, but *Newslook* editor Adhikari pointed out the greatest hope for budding online journalists.

"Censoring the 'Net is not that easy," he observed. Even for an absolute monarch. ■

For updates on the press freedom crisis in Nepal, visit www.cpj.org.

The Thin Red Line

Syrian journalists push boundaries, but uncertainty, fear remain.

By Rhonda Roumani

DAMASCUS, Syria

For more than four decades, the powerful and ever-looming security apparatus known as *mukhabarat* was a bright, unwavering red line. Any Syrian journalist who dared criticize the secret police did so in the Lebanese or international press—or not at all. So when journalist Hakam al-Baba criticized *mukhabarat* last fall for invasion of privacy and other offenses—in the government-run daily *Tishreen*, no less—his story drew plenty of attention.

Some journalists cited the story as evidence that a small measure of free speech had become acceptable in Syria in the last two years. “The concept of the forbidden is now debatable and that is a huge step,” said Ziad Haidar, correspondent for *As-Safir* newspaper in Damascus.

The appointment of Mehdi Dakhllallah, former editor of the Baath Party newspaper *Al-Baath*, as information minister in September 2004 also gave journalists hopes of real media reform. Dakhllallah, the first minister in 20 years to have worked as a journalist, has written openly about the need for democratic change.

Yet recent Syrian history also suggests that the promise of a freer press

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often collides with the reality of the country’s authoritarian regime. Five years ago, President Bashar al-Assad seemed to usher in freer expression during the “Damascus Spring”—only to clamp down a year later with restrictive media laws and a series of arrests.

Now, as Syria struggles with its loss of influence in Lebanon, the Syrian press appears constrained by that history of repression. So while some Syrian journalists are challenging the prohibitions known as red lines, many are fearful about pushing too far.

After the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in mid-February, the Syrian press

remained relatively silent on the issue of Lebanon. Journalists complained that the government was clamping down on the flow of information. Syrian newscasts didn’t air Lebanese opposition protests, and Syrian newspapers failed to print a single article critical of the country’s statements and policies. Criticism of Syria’s presence in Lebanon was confined to Gulf and Lebanese newspapers.

“The Syrian media did not know what to do with Hariri’s death,” said al-Baba, seated this day at a smoke-filled coffee shop in Cham Palace, a popular hangout for Syrian intellectuals, journalists and, of course, *mukhabarat*. “They did not show what was happen-



Lebanese protesters in Beirut wave anti-Syrian banners during a March broadcast of a speech by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Syrian journalists are challenging government restrictions but still shy from covering sensitive events such as this.

ing in Lebanon. When they reported that [Lebanese Prime Minister] Omar Karami's government resigned, they made no mention of the opposition."

Intense international pressure has heightened Syrian nationalism and made journalists' jobs more difficult. Instead of building on the momentum to critique government actions, the media has reverted to a defensive style, according to analysts and journalists.

"Syria has felt itself under a lot of pressure. So it felt like it needed to return to an old way of doing journalism," said Salam Kawakibi, a media analyst for the French Institute for the Middle East and great-grandson of Abdul-Rahman Kawakibi, a Syrian intellectual who promoted democratic change.

Salim Brahim, a reporter for The Associated Press, put the blame on the "mentality of fear until now. ... The mindset is not ready to take all of this openness, especially the mindset of government employees and government journalists."

Ironically, al-Baba's story was prompted by an article in the Lebanese paper *Al Nahar* that offered surprisingly positive comments about Syrian security forces. The author, Syrian journalist

security hotel." Red-haired and gruff, al-Baba said *Tishreen* agreed to publish the article only if he would remove a segment in which he likened Fayyad to a prisoner who learned to thank his guards for his salvation.

"I agreed to publish in *Tishreen* because it is important to talk about this subject in the Syrian media, which has not addressed the topic in 42 years," al-Baba said. He published the article in its entirety in the Lebanese newspaper *An-Nahar*—and said that *Tishreen* has since refused to publish any of his work.

Past promises of greater openness in Syria have gone unfulfilled. Despite al-Assad's pledges of reform, "Damascus Spring" came to an abrupt end in 2001, when 10 activists and members of Parliament were jailed and Decree 50 established Syria's new print law. Although this new law allowed for the creation of private publications, many saw it as a step backward from its 1949 predecessor.

The 2001 law prohibits publications from running any news that "hurts the national security and social unity" and the "dignity of the state." For printing "false information," a journalist

who was imprisoned for six months in 2003 after he published an article in *Al-Hayat* that described the Syrian government's plan to accept Iraqi refugees during the onset of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. "When the red lines are not clear, it is dangerous."

In the last two years, more than 100 new private publications—most of them social, cultural, and trade magazines—have been granted licenses. Only one is a political publication, *Black and White*, owned by Bilal Tourekmani, son of Syria's defense minister. *Black and White* has tackled sensitive subjects such as Syria's emergency law, but observers say Tourekmani is able to do so only because of an unofficial immunity granted to people of his status.

Dakhlallah said a committee is now in the process of reviewing and amending Syria's print law, but he is uncertain when its work will be completed. And changing the law, he said, is just one step in promoting greater openness.

"Compared to what used to be broadcast in the Syrian media, we have made some progress," said Dakhlallah, noting that the Syrian media has published articles criticizing the regime and included opposition figures in some television news programs. "Am I satisfied with what has been achieved until now? The answer is: No, I am not."

Hamidi, like other Syrian journalists, said that continuing uncertainty over what is allowed—and what is not—breeds self-censorship. At a recent demonstration organized by opposition figures to protest the emergency law, few Syrian journalists could be found in the crowd. Hamidi said he refused to cover the protest because of his fear that he would be accused of trying to harm the government.

"Yes, maybe now the ceiling is higher, maybe the red lines are less and the margin is wider," Hamidi said. "But the regime succeeded in putting the red lines in our minds and that takes a long time to change." ■

As Syria struggles with its loss of influence in Lebanon, the Syrian press appears constrained by a history of repression.

Nabil Fayyad, recounted the month he'd just spent in prison, where he'd been held under suspicion of being a founder of a group called the Liberal Discourse Club. In his article, Fayyad praised the security forces for the "moral and civilized treatment" he received while jailed.

Al-Baba mocked the communiqué in his published retort, noting that Fayyad failed to mention that the security services had invaded his privacy by searching his house and workplace before taking him to his "five-star

can face a three-year prison term—up from the one-year term in the previous law. Coverage of the army and the ministry of defense is off-limits. The prime minister approves all new publications and can suspend a publication without reason. The information minister can ban any publication that "harms the national sovereignty or disturbs the peace and contradicts public morals."

"You are always afraid that any article you write might be some sort of violation," said Ibrahim Hamidi,

The Rise of Rights?

In China, weiquan advocates find success is tempered by harsh reality.

By Sophie Beach

Reuters



Cheng Yizhong, the editor of *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, was arrested in March 2004 after exposing the fatal beating of a man in detention.

Sun Zhigang, a young graphic designer from Hubei Province, was arrested on the streets of Guangzhou in March 2003 for not carrying a required registration permit. Police brought him to a “custody and repatriation” center, one of the hundreds of detention facilities run by local governments to control migrant populations. Three days later, Sun was dead.

Reporters from *Nanfang Dushi Bao* (Southern Metropolis News), an aggressive daily run by groundbreaking editor Cheng Yizhong, soon discovered an official autopsy report that found Sun had been beaten to death in custody. Though well aware that a story on the autopsy would infuriate local officials, Cheng gave the go-ahead to publish it anyway. The article touched off a national scandal that led to important government reforms. But true to the nature of contemporary Chinese society—where emerging free-

Sophie Beach is editor of China Digital Times Web log and a former senior research associate for CPJ’s Asia program. She led a CPJ mission to Guangdong in 2004.

market forces regularly collide with authoritarian traditions—it also landed Cheng and three colleagues in prison.

The ensuing court battle became a prominent example of an emerging movement in China known as *weiquan* in which lawyers and legal scholars are more assertively defending the constitutional rights of individuals, including journalists, in court. The defense in the *Nanfang Dushi Bao* case ultimately won the release of Cheng and

who now runs the *New Century Net* Web site, which has covered many recent *weiquan* cases. “Journalists and lawyers from all over the country took on the *Nanfang Dushi Bao* case as an example of *weiquan* and that had a big influence on the outcome.”

Immediately after *Nanfang Dushi Bao* broke the Sun story on April 25, 2003, newspapers and Web sites throughout China republished the

The arrests of the top managers at one of the country’s most popular newspapers sent shock waves through the journalism community.

another defendant and secured shorter prison terms for others. But *weiquan*’s gains are modest thus far—and the government has shown only the most limited tolerance for its goals.

“The emergence and development of the *weiquan* movement reflects the awakening and ongoing maturation of Chinese civil society,” says Zhang Weiguo, a former journalist in China

account, chat rooms and bulletin boards exploded with outrage, and legal experts intensified calls for the abolition of the abuse-ridden “custody and repatriation” centers. In June 2003, the central government announced that all of the more than 800 centers would be closed. Six police officers and officials were jailed for their role in Sun’s death.

The positive outcome was a rare example of the Chinese media and public opinion exerting powerful influence over society. But local governments, which control all local media, including *Nanfang Dushi Bao*, wield considerable power in China. Within a year, Cheng and three other top officials from the paper were behind bars.

In late 2003, local authorities in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong, China's richest province, began investigating the finances of the newspaper. Journalists' salaries in China are notoriously low, and like many media organizations in China today, the paper had a practice of rewarding good journalists with generous bonuses. In December 2003, general manager Yu Huafeng was arrested on suspicion of corruption for transferring 580,000 renminbi (US \$70,000) from the advertising department to members of the editorial committee.

On March 19, 2004, Yu was convicted of corruption and embezzling public funds and sentenced to 12 years in jail. Li Minying, an official with the Southern Daily Group, the paper's parent company, was sentenced to 11 years for allegedly accepting a bribe from Yu. The same day, Cheng was arrested while on a trip to Sichuan Province. Police searched his house and confiscated a number of political books and magazines. Vice Editor Deng Haiyan was also arrested.

The arrests of the top management at one of the country's most popular and profitable newspapers sent shock waves through the journalism community in China. A former editor at another popular Guangzhou-based newspaper, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to his fears of reprisal, called the arrests "the most serious blow to the Chinese media in the last decade."

For many, *Nanfang Dushi Bao* represented the new face of the media in China. Launched by the Southern Daily Group as a profit-generating tabloid

partner to their staid mainstay, *Nanfang Ribao* (Southern Daily), the paper had a circulation of 1.4 million and \$20 million in profits in 2003. Cheng was widely respected in the journalism community for his pioneering approach, which featured tabloid-style reports on sports and entertainment combined with muckraking investigations into local officialdom.

Moreover, the evidence of corruption presented in the case was unconvincing to many observers. The activities that had put Yu, Li, Deng, and Cheng under suspicion were common practice in newsrooms around the country, including China Central Tele-

vision, the central government's own broadcasting arm, several Chinese journalists told CPJ. Many journalists knew the arrests were likely local officials' retaliation for the paper's coverage of Sun's case—along with its reporting on the resurgence of SARS in the province and other sensitive political topics.

In response, journalists launched an unprecedented campaign to win the release of their colleagues. They signed petitions on the Internet, wrote letters to the management of the Southern Daily Group, and protested to local authorities.



Sun Zhigang's family grieves as his killers are sentenced. Cheng Yizhong's newspaper uncovered the truth about Sun's death.

Lawyer Xu Zhiyong, an advocate for legal reforms who has taken on a number of politically sensitive cases, agreed to defend the *Nanfang Dushi Bao* journalists. Xu had been among a group of lawyers who successfully petitioned the government for the abolition of the “custody and repatriation” centers following Sun’s death.

Xu became one of the strongest public advocates for the journalists, helping establish a Web site, the *Open Constitutional Initiative*, which posted important documents about the case along with articles by legal scholars calling for their release. He held a public conference in Beijing to discuss the case and explain the defense arguments.

Like-minded lawyers pointed to the case as an example of China’s failure to reform into a country ruled by law. Specifically, they cited a constitutional amendment adopted by the National People’s Congress in 2004 that protects private property. They argued that since the money that Yu had disbursed was taken from the paper’s advertising revenue, it could not be counted as “public funds” even though Southern Daily Group, the parent company, was a state-owned corporation. In a document sent to local officials in Guangdong, several well-known legal scholars said the charges against the journalists “don’t go with the facts, don’t fit the law, and are not valid.”

While such outspokenness is often dangerous in China, where the government views any political dissent as a hostile act, these lawyers were partially empowered by the growing *weiquan*—“defend rights”—movement. The concept of *weiquan* has helped define a growing consciousness of constitutional rights among scholars, lawyers, dissidents, and others. Their demands for the rule of law, most often expressed in online forums, have largely escaped official censure because they often address issues falling within the government’s own evolving policies—such as legal

reform, anticorruption efforts, and the movement against “custody and repatriation” centers.

“In human rights cases that are not too sensitive, public scrutiny falls within the gray areas of what is legal,” the Beijing-based writer Liu Xiaobo Liu said in a recent essay. “The people’s wisdom is good at using this ambiguity to create a space to advance their own interests.”

Nevertheless, the lines demarcating politically acceptable speech in China are often blurry, and the government has begun to rein in some of these public activities. On November 25, 2004, *People’s Daily*, the official mouthpiece of the Communist Party, published an attack on so-called public intellectuals, or scholars, including journalists and lawyers, who take on a public role in civic life.

“All this talk about the intellectuals speaking up for the downtrodden is ridiculous and smacks of the ‘hero’ or ‘elite’ view of history,” wrote the

author, Ji Fangping. “The main characters in history are not the intellectuals but the broad masses of the people.”

author, Ji Fangping. “The main characters in history are not the intellectuals but the broad masses of the people.”

And, as CPJ reported in March 2005, Shanghai authorities suspended the law license of Guo Guoting, a lawyer who has defended several imprisoned journalists, dissidents, and Falun Gong supporters. The suspension notice cited articles Guo had posted online that criticized the Communist Party, but Guo told CPJ he believed that the suspension was due to his legal defense of cases involving free expression.

In the *weiquan* movement, each modest success is tempered by harsh reality—and the *Nanfang Dushi Bao* case illustrates the point well. Fol-

lowing an appeal on June 7, 2004, the sentences of Li and Yu were reduced to six and eight years, respectively. The day of the appeal trial, authorities closed the *Open Constitutional Web* site, providing no reason.

Two months later, both Cheng and Deng were released from prison without charge. Cheng was expelled from the Communist Party and was assigned an administrative post at the Southern Daily Group.

Many in China credit the unprecedented public support that the journalists received for Cheng and Deng’s release and the reduction in Li and Yu’s sentences. Yet Yu and Li remain in prison, and their families are losing hope that their sentences might be overturned on appeal. Cheng is free, but his journalism career is effectively over.

Yu’s wife, Xiang Li, said the lawyers and legal scholars who petitioned local officials for her husband’s release have received no reply from

In the *weiquan* movement, each modest success is tempered by harsh reality—and the *Nanfang Dushi Bao* case illustrates the point well.

authorities. “But, from another perspective, couldn’t the release of Cheng Yizhong and Deng Haiyan be considered a direct response?” she asked, seeming to take some consolation in that result.

Xiang vows to press on. She says she will continue to appeal Yu’s sentence “until the court declares Yu Huafeng innocent, until they return justice to us, and to the law.” Yet she, the journalists, their lawyers, and others fighting for the right to free expression in China clearly have a long and arduous road ahead. “In China, supervision by the media can only proceed within the existing system,” Cheng said in an interview published before his arrest. “Freedom means knowing how big your cage is.” ■

A Deadly Trial

As justice drags in a Philippine journalist's murder, three families fear for their safety.

By Dean M. Bernardo

MANILA, Philippines

Three years after commentator Edgar Damalerio was killed in a drive-by shooting on a crowded street in Pagadian City, about 500 miles south of here, at least one suspect, a former police officer, is finally headed for trial. But the families of Damalerio and the witnesses in the case are enduring a trial of their own—a deadly one.

Two witnesses to the May 2002 slaying have already been killed, and at least five members of three families are now in a witness protection program. Still other family members are in hiding, their lives regularly threatened as the trial of ex-Pagadian City cop Guillermo Wapile approaches.

The Damalerio murder, committed in sight of a police station, cast a harsh light on the culture of lawlessness in Pagadian City, a trading port of 150,000 on the island of Mindanao. Another journalist, radio commentator Olimpio Jalapit, was killed in Pagadian City just two years before. Both slayings are among the nationwide toll of 48 journalists who have been murdered over two decades. With no convictions in any of these murders, the Damalerio case has become a test of the Philippine judicial system.

"If not for the support we've received from all over, we would have

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lost this case—or we would all be dead by now," Damalerio's wife, Gemma, said in a telephone interview arranged by the Department of Justice. She and her youngest daughter are in the federal protection program through the end of the trial. One witness, Juvy Lovitaño, was killed three years ago. Another, schoolteacher Edgar Amoro, was shot down in February. A third witness, Edgar Ongue, survived an attempt on his life last year, when an assailant's gun malfunctioned. Their families have been threatened, too.

"The day my husband died, I received a text message saying they vowed to eliminate the rest of the members of my family," Erlinda Amoro said. She said she had to quit her job, move, and scatter her family to evade the killers. For now, she and one child are in the protection program. So is Ongue.

The case has been tainted by allegations of police obstruction. This year, Secretary of Justice Raul Gonzales directed prosecutors to investigate former Pagadian City Police Chief Azuri Hawani for alleged "obstruction of justice and possible accessory to the crime." Although two eyewitnesses identified Wapile, local police initially named a different suspect. Witnesses said police wiped the crime scene clean and failed to take photographs. Within days of the shooting, a federal investigator urged local police to arrest Wapile—but more than two years passed before the suspect surrendered.

The case against Wapile depends in part on the testimony of Amoro and Ongue, who were riding in the jeep with Damalerio when a gunman fired at them from a motorcycle. Amoro signed a sworn affidavit that can be entered as evidence. The third witness, Lovitaño, did not give sworn testimony and his signed police statement will be of less help to prosecutors. Before he was killed, Lovitaño told the National Bureau of Investigation that a local police officer had approached him looking to take out a contract on Damalerio's life. Damalerio was known for taking on police and government corruption in his radio and television broadcasts.

Defense lawyers did not respond to messages seeking comment for this story. Wapile and Hawani have publicly denied involvement. Concerned that a fair trial was impossible in Pagadian City, the Damalerio family and press advocates urged that the case be moved. Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilarion Davide agreed to transfer the case to Cebu City, about 350 miles south of Manila. Wapile faces a possible death penalty if convicted. The trial is expected to begin soon, but no date has been set.

"I'm hoping that the monitoring and support on this case continues until we get justice," Gemma Damalerio said. But appeals could extend for years, and the families expect to lose federal protection once the initial trial concludes. Gonzales said he assured the families of support, but he acknowledged "the government doesn't have all the money to guard and protect the witnesses for an extended time."

Damalerio and Amoro said their families hope to enlist the help of press advocates and government officials to resettle outside Pagadian City after the trial. But that may not be far enough, they said, and leaving the Philippines might be their best chance for survival. ■

Read "Elusive Justice," CPJ's 2002 report on the case, at www.cpj.org.

Deyda Hydara

To his final days, a fearless editor stood up for his beliefs.

By Pap Saine



The Point/Pap Saine

Deyda Hydara inspired many young Gambian journalists with his courage.

BANJUL, The Gambia

Deyda Hydara was a principled man, a mentor to young reporters, and a fearless editor who was willing to take a stand against the government. In the days before his murder, Hydara led a campaign against repressive government-sponsored legislation that sets lengthy jail terms for libel and allows editors' homes to be seized.

We were friends for 35 years and partners for nearly half that time in the publication of *The Point*, a Banjul newspaper printed four times a week. Our paper was founded on December 16, 1991. Exactly 13 years later, on the night we celebrated *The Point's* anniversary,

Pap Saine is editor of *The Point*, which continues to provide independent news for Gambians.

sary, a gunman in a passing taxicab fired bullets into the head and chest of my friend as he drove home on a dark, rural street.

Hydara was 58. He leaves his wife, Maria, a daughter, and three sons.

Authorities arrested a local restaurateur in February, an ardent government supporter who had quarreled bitterly with Hydara over his critical reporting. Yet local journalists have many questions and have urged police to investigate the "Green Boys," a shadowy pro-government group that has made numerous threats against journalists who criticize authorities.

There is good reason to question, given the record of threats and attacks on the Gambian press. Arsonists struck Radio 1 FM in Banjul in August 2000, leaving proprietor George Christensen with burns. In October 2003, arsonists set fire to the offices of *The Independent*, a private biweekly in Banjul, forcing staff to relocate temporarily. Six months later, armed men stormed a building in suburban Kanifing that housed *The Independent's* printing press, setting it ablaze and injuring three employees.

Then, on August 15, 2004, arsonists struck the home of Ebrihima Sillah, a BBC stringer in Banjul. In the weeks before the attack, the Green Boys had threatened Sillah in a letter to the BBC.

Journalists had much reason to be cautious as 2004 came to a close—and my friend had little left to prove in a

distinguished career noted for outspoken independence. He was president of the Gambia Press Union for a decade, treasurer of the West African Journalists Association, and a longtime correspondent for Agence France-Presse. He worked for press freedom with the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders.

In the last weeks of the year, though, Hydara stood up to the government. He was vocal in his opposition to the obnoxious new press laws—and he acted on his beliefs. He suspended publication of *The Point* for a week in protest, even though it cost the paper some lucrative advertising. The National Assembly passed the new laws on December 14, 2004.

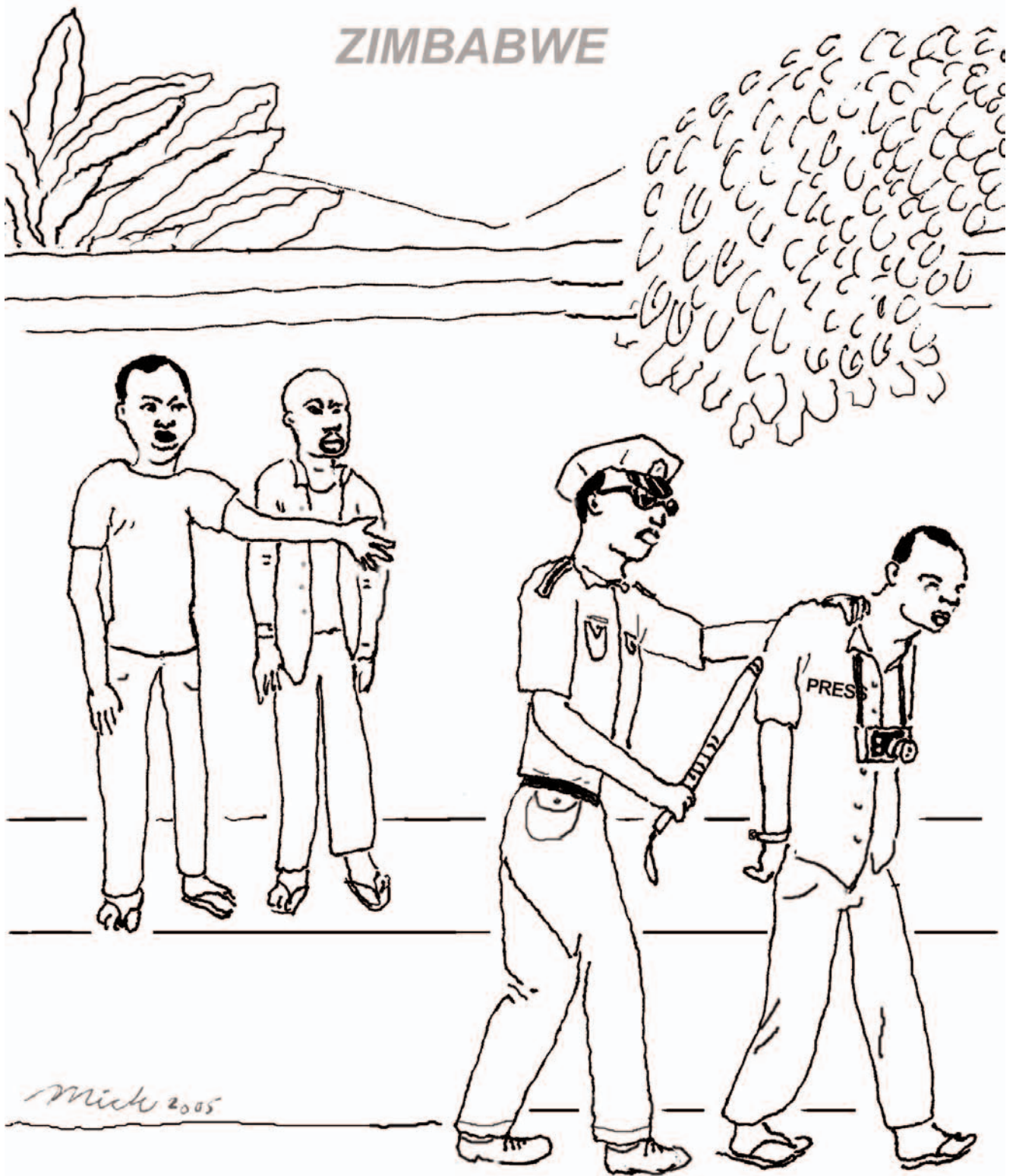
Two days later, the staff had a dinner to mark our anniversary. After the gathering, Hydara gave a lift home to two of our staffers, Ida Jagne and Nyansarang Jobe, at around 11 p.m. A Mercedes-Benz taxi without a license plate came up quickly from behind in Kanifing, about nine miles (15 kilometers) west of Banjul.

Hydara turned off the main road, but the taxi followed, with the driver flashing his headlights. As Hydara slowed and the cab pulled alongside, a passenger fired several times, striking Hydara twice and causing him to lose control of the car. Jagne, who was wounded in the attack along with Jobe, remembers crying out, "My boss is killed."

Shortly after his murder, the *Gambia News and Report* named him Man of the Year. Hydara was, in fact, a man of courage, humility, and generosity throughout his life. Among his good works was a fund-raising campaign to rehabilitate Old Jeswang Cemetery.

He was buried there on December 17, 2004. Three days after our friend and colleague was laid to rest, journalists in the Gambia, Senegal, Mali, and Ghana marched in protest. They carry on his legacy, determined to seek justice. ■

For updates on the Deyda Hydara case, visit www.cpj.org.



“I didn’t realize that elections were coming up.”