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A photographer takes pictures of
Libyan fighters in Tripoli in May.

AFP/Mahmud Turkia



At least 129 journalists have lost their lives in Syria since its brutal civil war began in 2011. Most were caught in crossfire while covering a war that has inflicted unimaginable devastation and displaced millions. Since CPJ began keeping records, only in Iraq have more journalists perished. Wartime has become deadlier than ever for journalists.

So when our Beirut-based representative began receiving pleas for help in the summer of 2018, we knew we had to act. Rebel strongholds were falling to President Bashar al-Assad’s army, and many journalists believed arrest, torture, and death were on the way. They needed to get out of Syria.

What unfolded over the next year was an unprecedented effort to win safe passage and refuge for 69 Syrian journalists and their families, an effort we kept quiet until now to protect the journalists and delicate negotiations. The assignment was difficult and emotionally intense for the dedicated CPJ team that carried it out. Few countries were inclined to accept more Syrian refugees. It goes without saying that logistics were tough. But we pressed on, partnering with two key allies to carry out a complex assignment involving information gathering, distribution of financial assistance, and advocacy with more than 20 governments. As of August, our coalition assisted 27 journalists who have fled to Turkey and helped another 31 journalists and their families evacuate to Western Europe. We expect two more journalists to reach Europe soon.

After a year of “stories of loss and hope and suffering and endurance,” wrote our Middle East and North Africa representative, Ignacio Miguel Delgado, in May after putting 11 journalists on a flight to Spain, “I still cannot believe that this is finally happening.”

In this report, we share stories that show the lengths to which CPJ’s dedicated staff go to defend colleagues the world over—work we could not do without you.

We held a summit in Mexico City that put press freedom on the national agenda and a spotlight on the country’s epidemic of journalist murders. We went to Bratislava to again urge officials to expedite charges in the assassination of journalist Ján Kuciak, and Slovak prosecutors indicted a businessman alleged to have ordered the hit the next month. That’s a conviction we are determined to win. And we continue to lead a global effort to secure justice for *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi, whose brazen October 2018 murder by Saudi Arabian officials linked to the crown prince shocked the world.

Across the globe, CPJ fought hard for journalists imprisoned on unjust or retaliatory charges. We carried out a campaign for the release of Reuters reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Saw Oo in Myanmar, who were finally freed in March after more than 500 days behind bars. In June, Nicaragua released Lucía Pineda and Miguel Mora, CPJ’s 2019 awardees, after six months in pre-trial detention on anti-state charges. All told, our advocacy has helped win the early release of at least 45 journalists in the first half of 2019.

All of this was made possible by you—and your support of our work. Thank you, to each one of you, for all that you have done for CPJ and for our colleagues around the world.

Joel Simon
Executive Director



Committee to Protect Journalists

CPJ has its headquarters in New York with staff in Washington. We also have experts and contributors in Bangkok, Beirut, Berlin, Bogotá, Brussels, Istanbul, London, Managua, Mexico City, Miami, Nairobi, New Delhi, São Paulo, and Taipei.

United States

CPJ mobilized in response to the murder of *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi. We advocated with Congress, conducted press conferences, and launched a campaign calling for justice.
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Slovakia

CPJ pushed Slovakian officials to hold Ján Kuciak's killers to account, while also advocating with EU leaders for justice.
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Tunisia

A CPJ delegation to Tunis in June won commitments from Tunisian officials to not restrict journalists covering the country's elections and to not disrupt internet services.

Nigeria

CPJ monitored and documented press freedom issues from Abuja and Lagos during the Nigerian elections in February.
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Egypt

CPJ advocacy helped win the release from prison of journalists Shawkan and Alaa Abdelfattah, but, with the daily restrictions placed on them, there is a long way to go.
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South Africa

CPJ was an international election observer in South Africa, where we also monitored press freedom violations and provided safety information to journalists.
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Kyrgyzstan

CPJ continued to urge Kyrgyz officials to release Azimjon Askarov, a reporter serving a life term in prison on fabricated charges.

India

CPJ discussed reporting challenges and provided safety information to journalists in six cities in India during the run-up to the national elections.
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Philippines

CPJ mobilized the press in defense of news website *Rappler* and its editor, Maria Ressa. Our mission to the country found a shrinking space for a free press.
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Myanmar

CPJ advocacy helped win the release from prison of imprisoned Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo.

Mexico

CPJ hosted a press freedom summit that engaged journalists, activists, and government leaders in discussions on tackling impunity in journalist murders and improving the media environment.
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Ecuador

The government reformed its repressive Communications Law after CPJ met with administration leaders and pushed for change.

Nicaragua

CPJ provided assistance and safety information to journalists covering the unrest in Nicaragua and advocated on behalf of journalists imprisoned in the country.
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People hold banners of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi during a symbolic funeral prayer in Istanbul in November.

AFP/Bulent Kilic



‘When I speak of the fear, intimidation, arrests, and public shaming of intellectuals and religious leaders who dare to speak their minds, and then I tell you that I’m from Saudi Arabia, are you surprised?’

—Jamal Khashoggi, *The Washington Post*, September 18, 2017

Finding #JusticeForJamal

On October 3, 2018, the day after *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi disappeared inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, CPJ issued a statement expressing alarm. After that, events unfolded quickly.

On October 6, we called on Saudi Arabia to account for Khashoggi’s whereabouts. Two weeks later, Saudi Arabia said the journalist was killed during a fight in the consulate. Eventually, authorities admitted he was murdered. In November, the CIA said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had likely ordered the murder.

CPJ led an appeal with other groups at the U.N. in October, calling for an investigation into Khashoggi’s murder. Secretary-General António Guterres acknowledged CPJ’s request, but did not commit to do so. Separately, in a report in June 2019, U.N. Special Rapporteur Agnès Callamard found the murder was “overseen, planned, and endorsed by high-level [Saudi] officials.”

Since Khashoggi’s murder, CPJ has urged U.S. Congress to take action. In February, 22 Republican and Democratic senators issued a letter to the Trump administration, which triggered an investigation resulting in sanctions on 17 individuals. Later, the House introduced a bipartisan resolution citing our data that called for denying visas to Saudi officials involved in the murder.

But the Trump administration has shown little to no interest in pursuing justice.

“Unfortunately, the current administration has not been a forceful advocate for press freedom,” CPJ

Executive Director Joel Simon said in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee alongside Khashoggi’s fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, in May. “To counter this, Congress must step up its efforts.”

CPJ is keeping Khashoggi’s murder in the international spotlight, including with scores of interviews given to news outlets. On the International Day to End Impunity in Crimes Against Journalists, we participated in a memorial service organized by the Justice for Jamal coalition. At our 2018 awards dinner, we launched a #JusticeForJamal campaign. In December, we spoke in support of a resolution to name the street in front of the Saudi embassy “Khashoggi Way.”

In February, the day before the deadline for the Trump administration to deliver a report to the Senate on its findings, CPJ held a press conference in front of the White House to demand accountability. We partnered with the Knight Institute to file FOIA requests to determine whether U.S. intelligence agencies fulfilled their “duty to warn” Khashoggi of the impending threat to his life. In June, we spoke in front of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

“I have made a different choice now,” Khashoggi wrote in a 2017 article for *The Washington Post*. “I have left my home, my family, and my job, and I am raising my voice. To do otherwise would betray those who languish in prison. I can speak when so many cannot. I want you to know that Saudi Arabia has not always been as it is now.

“We Saudis deserve better.”



CPJ’s executive director, Joel Simon, testifies alongside Jamal Khashoggi’s fiancée, Hatice Cengiz, before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee in May.

AFP/Getty Images/Chip Somodevilla

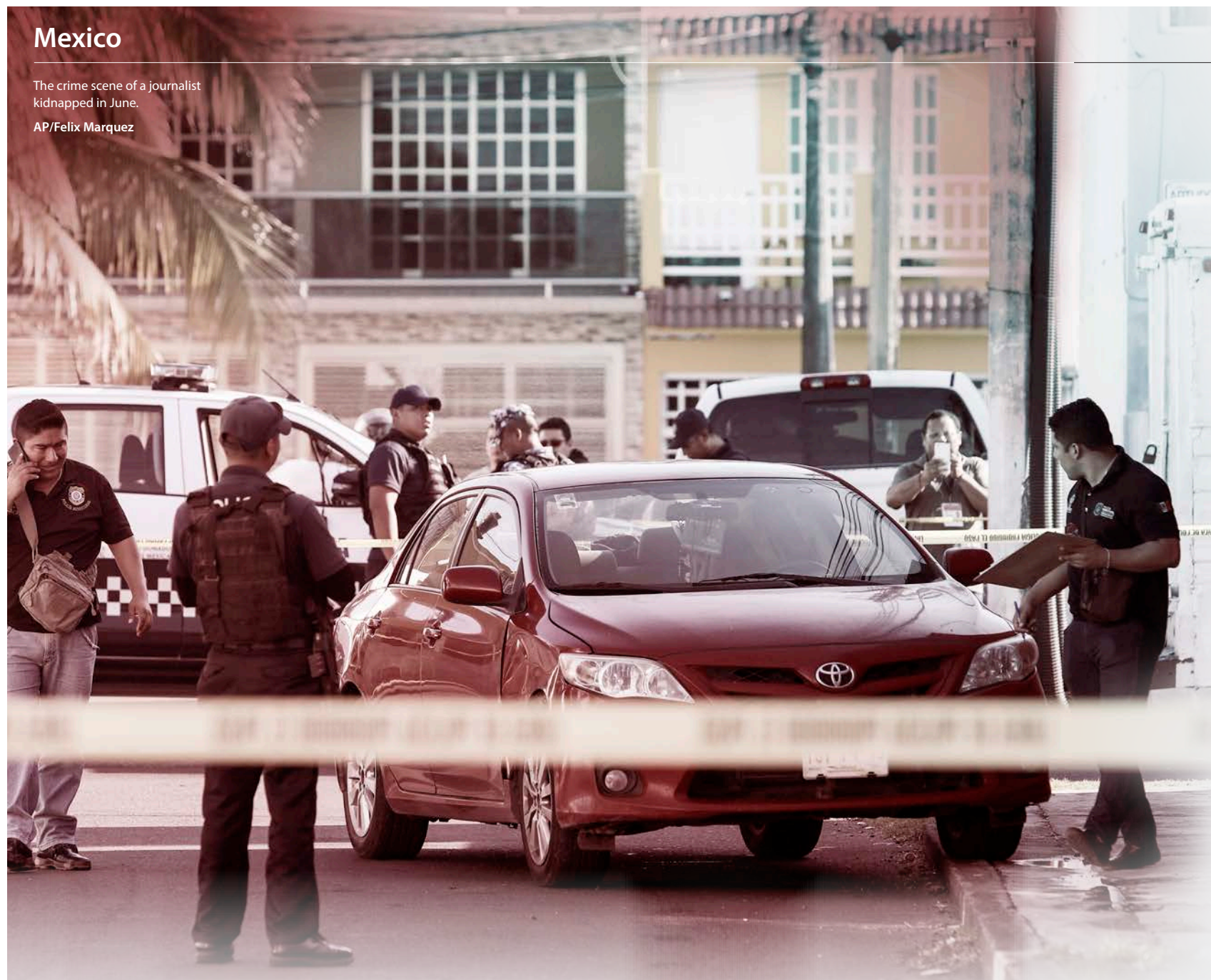


CPJ participates on a panel discussion during a memorial for Jamal Khashoggi.

AFP/Getty Images/Zach Gibson

The crime scene of a journalist kidnapped in June.

AP/Felix Marquez



A historic opportunity for the Mexican press

Investigative reporter Anabel Hernández held aloft a bulletproof vest sent by the Mexican government after she received threats. “This is the way to protect journalists?” she asked the audience at CPJ’s press freedom summit in Mexico City in June.

The award-winning writer fled the country last year, and for good reason. A grim cocktail of corruption and organized crime has made Mexico the deadliest country for the press in the Western Hemisphere. Over the past 15 years, 100 journalists have been killed, 42 of whom CPJ confirmed were murdered for their work. And impunity is entrenched—in not a single murder have all the killers been convicted.

So far, the president’s record has been mixed.

Mexico’s federal protection mechanism, created in 2012 with support from CPJ, provides bulletproof vests and other protective measures to journalists and human rights defenders under threat. But root problems remain. “The only way to save the lives of journalists is to make the institutions work, to have investigations done, and to have the government act like a government,” Hernández said.

Hope that the government would finally tackle the crisis in journalist safety bloomed when President Andrés Manuel López Obrador won a sweeping electoral victory in July 2018 and assumed office in December with a solid reformist mandate. However, so far his record has been mixed. He has both declared support for freedom of the press and engaged in regular rhetorical attacks on critical

journalists. He has not put forward a policy agenda to address the country’s press freedom emergency. CPJ invited López Obrador, hoping he would use the event, attended by 400 journalists, activists, academics, and government officials, to discuss concrete ways to improve the climate and stop the violence. The summit put press freedom on the national agenda, generating at least 85 reports and columns, and coverage in every major Mexican media outlet. Dolia Estévez, a columnist for the weekly *SinEmbargo* weekly and freelance journalist, called the event a “breakthrough.”

Although the president did not attend, other officials did, including Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez, Mexico’s sub-secretary for human rights. Encinas acknowledged impunity and violence against journalists as grave problems and committed to strengthening the federal protection mechanism, which needs more funding and trained personnel. Other officials committed to reform federal spending on advertising, which today warps the press.

In an open letter following the summit, CPJ’s executive director, Joel Simon, laid out a path forward for López Obrador: prioritize crimes against journalists, combat impunity, shore up the protection mechanism, reform federal advertising, and renounce the illegal use of spyware to surveil journalists that proliferated under his predecessor.

“Your administration promised to be different, and we believe it can be,” Simon wrote. “Should your administration choose to make the lives of journalists safer and make the Mexican press freer, your government will have truly been transformational.”

Journalists, including Anabel Hernández (center), speak on a panel at CPJ’s press freedom summit in June.

Ian Garcíafigueroa



Tanzanian journalist Azory Gwanda has been missing since November 2017.

Mwananchi Publications Limited



#WhereIsAzory?

On a November morning in 2017, freelance journalist Azory Gwanda told his wife he had to take an emergency trip and would be back the next day. He spoke to her from the backseat of a white Land Rover, accompanied by men believed to be security agents. When she returned home later that day, the family's belongings were in disarray. She hasn't heard from her husband since.

The world has not forgotten the Tanzanian press.

A contributor to local Tanzanian newspapers *Mwananchi* and *The Citizen*, Gwanda had been digging into mysterious killings in a rural area. The police promised to investigate his disappearance, but there has been no sign of a credible inquiry or information on his whereabouts. In July 2019, Tanzania's foreign minister told the BBC that Gwanda had "disappeared and died," but then quickly backtracked, claiming the government has no information on whether he is dead or alive. The case has chilled the local press.

One year after Gwanda vanished, CPJ's Africa program coordinator, Angela Quintal, and sub-Saharan Africa representative, Muthoki Mumo, touched down in Tanzania with plans to investigate his disappearance and to meet local journalists to learn about the challenges they face.

Gwanda is the kind of local journalist CPJ is committed to defending: a workaday muckraker chasing vital stories who lacks the protection and backing of a large international news organization. It's not work that's appreciated by the powerful. "You have turned a nobody into a somebody," a Cameroonian government minister griped to Quintal in 2017, referring to CPJ's advocacy for then-jailed radio journalist Ahmed Abba.

In the capital, Dar es Salaam, Quintal and Mumo were about to get a taste of what journalists like Gwanda and Abba face. A week after they arrived, government agents came to their hotel, seized their passports and devices, and took them to a mysterious location where they were roughly interrogated about their activities, including why they were so interested in Gwanda.

Fortunately, Quintal managed to alert CPJ of their impending arrest—and to tell the whole world with swift posts to Twitter and Facebook. They were released hours later and left the country with the help of their embassies and CPJ partners. When CPJ delivered a letter of protest to President John Magufuli at a meeting with Tanzania's U.N. ambassador, Modest Mero, he expressed regret about their detention.

By April, CPJ had turned the floodlights on Azory Gwanda's case with our #WhereIsAzory campaign. *The Washington Post* featured Gwanda in two full-page ads as part of its Press Freedom Partnership. He is featured on the monthly list of "10 Most Urgent" cases taken up by the One Free Press Coalition, a global group of more than 30 media organizations who use their collective voice to defend journalists.

In November, CPJ will give another dogged Tanzanian a global stage. In New York, we will honor Maxence Melo Mubyazi, the owner and co-founder of Jamii Forums, with an International Press Freedom Award. His popular East and Central African news website and discussion forum is a digital-storytelling innovator. For years, Melo has been harassed, detained, interrogated, and hauled into court to fight bogus cybercrime charges. By awarding Melo, we will again show that the world has not forgotten the Tanzanian press.



The Facebook post published by CPJ's Africa program coordinator Angela Quintal as she and CPJ's Muthoki Mumo were being detained in Tanzania in November 2018.

Nicaraguans protest for the release of political prisoners in May.

AFP/Inti Ocon



Journalists Lucía Pineda Ubau and Miguel Mora are freed from prison in June.

Reuters/Oswaldo Rivas

A crackdown in Nicaragua

For six months, Miguel Mora and Lucía Pineda Ubau were confined to cramped, sunless, putrid cells in Managua's notorious El Chipote prison. The director and news director of independent news channel 100% Noticias were interrogated dozens of times and pressured to apologize to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega for calling him a dictator.

"We were in cells of total isolation, like small graves. There were very narrow windows. I did not talk to anyone. We were basically buried alive," Mora said.

Their crimes? Airing reports about anti-Ortega protests, including images of police and paramilitary forces shooting at protesters. For this work, police raided 100% Noticias' newsroom in December 2018, seizing its equipment and ordering it off the air. Mora and Pineda were arrested and charged with "inciting violence and hate" and "promoting terrorism."

'We were basically buried alive.'

The TV journalists became two of Nicaragua's most prominent political prisoners, whose number swelled as protests against Ortega's autocratic rule and social security cutbacks began in April 2018 and stretched into late summer, leading to at least 325 deaths, including one journalist. During a crackdown in December, we documented police raids on outlets including the website *Confidencial* and its sister TV programs, "Esta Noche" and "Esta Semana," directed by the independent journalist Carlos Fernando Chamorro, who, fearing for his safety, later relocated to Costa Rica, joining more than 50 other Nicaraguan journalists in exile.

But the game shifted as the U.S. stepped up sanctions and the Organization of American States pushed the Ortega government to negotiate with the opposition. In March, the parties forged a deal under which the government would release all political prisoners, while officers who cracked down on protesters would receive amnesty. "By freeing the prisoners, they're hoping to reduce international pressure," a former Nicaraguan foreign minister told *The Washington Post*.

CPJ also applied pressure. We featured Mora and Pineda from April through June on our monthly list of "10 Most Urgent" cases for the One Free Press Coalition, a group of news outlets that publicize the list. They were finally freed, and the charges against them dropped, on June 11, one day after the *Post* published a full-page ad displaying CPJ's call for their release.

Mora and Pineda's freedom is a relief, and CPJ is honoring them with its 2019 International Press Freedom Award for their bravery and courage in reporting the news. But many questions remain. Though they are determined to revive 100% Noticias, will the government return their equipment, restore access to their building, and allow them to work without interference? Will exiled journalists be able to return home and work freely?

CPJ has provided financial assistance and information and safety advice to journalists in Nicaragua and in exile throughout the crisis, and will continue to find ways to help them rebuild. We don't know when Nicaragua will be safe for independent journalists, but one thing is clear: International pressure can change the equation. So we will keep the pressure on.

Maria Ressa speaks during a protest for press freedom in Manila in January.
AFP/Ted Aljibe



Maria Ressa is presented with CPJ's 2018 Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award by Sheila Coronel, dean of Columbia University's journalism school and CPJ's senior adviser.

Getty Images/Dia Dipasupil



Protecting the Philippine press

The agents who came to arrest Maria Ressa had impeccable timing. They arrived at 5:30 on a Friday evening in February, just after the courts had closed, to arrest the founder and executive editor of the independent news website *Rappler* on cyber libel charges. Ressa was denied bail from the sole judge on duty and spent the night in detention, while her supporters protested outside.

The government of President Rodrigo Duterte was stepping up an already intense year-long campaign of legal harassment of Ressa and *Rappler*. It had hit them with 11 cases and investigations in a transparent attempt to shutter one of the Philippines' only defiantly critical news outlets.

Exhausted, Ressa drifted off, thinking: "The more they do this, the more I have firsthand knowledge of how power is abused. The more they try to intimidate me, the more certain I am that I must keep fighting," she recalled in the *Columbia Journalism Review* this summer.

In 2018, CPJ honored Ressa with its Gwen Ifill Press Freedom Award in recognition of her extraordinary and sustained contributions to press freedom—and that was before her latest legal troubles. Ressa has been arrested twice this year and posted bail multiple times. She must get a coterie of court approvals to travel overseas. Legal hassles now take up 90 percent of her time, she says: "The attacks have been overwhelming."

CPJ responded rapidly to Ressa's February detention, helping shine a bright media spotlight on the injustice—more than 800 stories about her arrest cited CPJ. She was released the next day.

In April, a CPJ board delegation, accompanied by Peter Greste, the director of the Australia-based

Alliance for Journalists' Freedom, met with journalists and government officials in Manila to draw attention to the treatment of *Rappler* and escalating assaults on press freedom in the Philippines. CPJ spoke to Under Secretary Jose Joel Egco, head of the Presidential Task Force on Media Security, who shared details of a journalist safety program. He reiterated his promise of convictions for the 2009 Maguindanao massacre, in which 58 people died, including 32 journalists—the largest single case of journalist murders ever recorded by CPJ. A trial is ongoing but has suffered many delays, and not one conviction has been obtained.

'I must keep fighting.'

The mission found increasing levels of intimidation and a shrinking space for the local press. But we succeeded in shining a light on government repression and its treatment of *Rappler*, attracting considerable media coverage—and denunciations by both the presidential palace and Justice Ministry. We made sure the government knows we are watching and that local journalists know they are not alone.

While the harassment and lawsuits continue, Ressa remains free and *Rappler* continues to publish. CPJ is determined to ensure they are not driven into bankruptcy by the legal assault. In December, we joined with our partners to launch a legal defense fund and fundraising campaign that will support media—starting with *Rappler* and Ressa—facing legal battles designed to suppress critical reporting.

Their defense will also get help from human rights lawyer Amal Clooney, who in July became Ressa and *Rappler's* international counsel. Clooney will focus on protecting them under international law, working alongside their local legal team.

And CPJ will continue standing by their side.

Protesters march on the anniversary of the murder of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, Martina Kušnírová, in 2019 in Bratislava.

AFP/Vladimir Simicek



CPJ visits a memorial for Slovakian journalist Ján Kuciak.

CPJ/Gulnoza Said

Pushing for justice in Slovakia

Ján Kuciak loved digging into company documents for signs of misdeeds.

The Slovakian reporter for news website *Aktuality* was one of hundreds of investigative journalists around the world who in 2015 and 2016 combed through the Panama Papers. In 2017, Kuciak began an 18-month effort to collect documents about possible links between Slovakia's prime minister and the Italian mafia. Also that year, he published a series of stories about tax fraud and corruption by a prominent businessman, Marian Kočner.

Tangling with powerful and shadowy people and taking on big-money interests was noble and exciting work for the 27-year-old muckraker. It was also more dangerous than he realized.

Killers of journalists must face consequences.

On a dark night in February 2018, an assassin entered his village home beside a forest. Armed with a Luger 9mm fitted with a silencer, the gunman first shot Kuciak's fiancée, Martina Kušnírová, between the eyes as she stood in her kitchen. Then he pumped two bullets into Kuciak's chest at close range.

It was the first journalism-related murder in Slovakia that CPJ had documented, and one of few in Europe. The executions of the young couple, who had been preparing for a spring wedding, stunned the country. Decrying the backslide into authoritarianism, tens of thousands of Slovaks took to the streets in the largest protests in Slovakia since the fall of communism. They demanded an independent investigation, a crackdown on entrenched corruption, and snap elections.

CPJ seized the moment. We called for justice in Kuciak's murder, for improved journalist safety,

and for press freedom to be strengthened across the European Union. In April 2018, CPJ met with the vice-president of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, and Commissioner for Justice Věra Jourová. We also took our concerns to the European Parliament.

The outcry led to a cascade of resignations in Slovakia: the prime minister in March, the interior minister in April, and the police chief in May. With a new chief in place, Slovak police in September charged four people, including a woman associated with Kočner, who they alleged paid 70,000 euros for the hit. Three months earlier, Kočner, who denied involvement, had been detained for financial crimes that Kuciak had written about.

In December, CPJ and eight partner organizations assembled in Vienna for a meeting of the Council of Europe's Secretariat to discuss an information-sharing project on threats to journalist safety, of which CPJ is a member. Together we traveled to Bratislava to meet Slovak officials to discuss the Kuciak murder investigation, call for justice, and speak to local journalists about continued challenges. The delegates also visited the Ján Kuciak memorial to lay flowers and light candles.

On the one-year anniversary of the February murders, CPJ returned to Bratislava to urge officials to expedite charges in Kuciak's murder and to implement a safety mechanism for journalists. We received assurances that Slovak authorities recognize the need for better journalist protections and that new charges against one or more masterminds were on the way.

The next month, special prosecutors charged Kočner with ordering Kuciak's murder. We are monitoring the case closely. Killers of journalists, including masterminds of the crime, must face consequences.

Sudanese protesters wave national flags during a rally in Khartoum in April.

AFP/Ashraf Shazly



The promise of hope in Sudan

When Amal Khalifa Idris Habbani stood up on a New York stage to accept CPJ's International Press Freedom Award in November 2018, the Sudanese journalist and press freedom advocate railed against the government's "horrific violations against press freedom to conceal its crimes and widespread violations of human rights."

Habbani had been detained many times for her coverage of protests and official wrongdoing. In January 2018, she was beaten with electric sticks while in custody and suffered serious injuries. "Journalists in Sudan are in the frontline against the regime," she said. "I hope the world will pay attention to their oppression."

Less than a month after Habbani's speech, massive street protests began convulsing the country. By April, the pressure led the Sudanese military to oust Omar Hassan al-Bashir, president for three decades.

Sudan's journalists would not go quietly.

For years, CPJ covered the regime's detention, harassment, and relentless censorship of Sudanese journalists reporting on government corruption and, by 2018, the growing protests over economic hardships. Something was brewing in Sudan, and we selected Habbani for our annual award, in part,

to cast light on this underreported story. After CPJ media introductions, Habbani was included among the journalist "Guardians" named in December as *TIME* magazine's Person of the Year.

That month, as anti-government protests spread, the regime stepped up internet and media-outlet shutdowns, newspaper confiscations, and journalist arrests. But Sudan's journalists would not go quietly. Some sought to evade print censorship by publishing their articles online. Some newspapers went to press with blank spaces where censored protest coverage and opinion columns should have been. "I continue to do my work because with every day I become more certain I am doing something great," columnist Shamael Elnoor told CPJ.

As a peaceful revolution unfolded, CPJ demanded that the regime release detained journalists and end censorship. After al-Bashir fell, the interim authority did just that. It released scores of political prisoners, including journalists. Giddy reporters worked freely, some for the first time in their lives.

The continued attention of the world will be vital as the people of Sudan attempt to birth a democracy, supported by a free press. "We have been living through a remarkable flowering of freedom of expression," freelance journalist Reem Abbas wrote in *The Washington Post*. "The fear of retaliation has vanished—at least for the moment."



Sudanese journalist Amal Habbani speaks after accepting CPJ's 2018 International Press Freedom Award.

Getty Images/Dia Dipasupil

Saving lives in Syria

Nour al-Rifaa'i had to get out of Quneitra. A reporter for the pro-opposition broadcaster Al-Jisr and for Baladi News Network, he had closely covered the Syrian army's brutal campaign in the southern governorates of Daraa and Quneitra, including the shelling and forced displacement of civilians. Now, President Bashar al-Assad's army and its allies had retaken the area, and his arrest looked imminent.

Al-Rifaa'i fled north to Idlib, another rebel-held stronghold, in July 2018, leaving his wife, two-year-old son, and infant daughter behind. But Idlib was not safe either. In December, men from the Al-Qaeda offshoot Hayat Tahrir al-Sham raided the house where al-Rifaa'i was staying and detained everyone. He was held for 30 days and interrogated repeatedly.

Al-Rifaa'i was one of many Syrian journalists who came to CPJ's attention in the summer of 2018

who were in trouble in Daraa, Quneitra, and Idlib. Ultimately, we identified 69 journalists who needed immediate evacuation. In Syria, they faced arrest, torture, forced disappearance, and possibly death.

CPJ would undertake an unprecedented yearlong effort to secure safe passage and refuge in other countries for these journalists. We formed a team led by our Emergencies department, supported by our Advocacy department, and manned on the ground by Beirut-based Middle East and North Africa Representative Ignacio Miguel Delgado.

CPJ provided emergency funds for basic living and travel expenses, but we needed our partners to help tackle this complex situation. The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression spearheaded the gathering of information about the journalists and their families, with Delgado providing support from

Beirut. Together with Reporters Without Borders, CPJ contacted dozens of national governments in a quest to find safe havens, and pressed U.N. officials to help identify and persuade potential host countries to step up.

This teamwork paid off. Mexico and Ecuador agreed to take several journalists, followed by Germany, France, and Spain. By July 2019, CPJ had helped get 58 journalists and their families out of Syria—half to Turkey and half to Western Europe. Now, we aim to pilot a program to enable those living in exile in Spain to continue to work as journalists.

Al-Rifaa'i was among a group of 11 journalists and seven family members who left for Spain in May. Delgado accompanied them to the Spanish embassy in Ankara to get their documents and then to the Istanbul airport. "I have cried more than

once (out of happiness and relief), shared laughs and jokes, listened to stories of loss and hope and suffering and endurance," Delgado wrote in a message to CPJ colleagues that day. "I still cannot believe that this is finally happening."

Yet Al-Rafaa'i's wife and children were still trapped in Syria. A month later, though, Spain approved their travel. The trio crossed into Lebanon, where Delgado helped them get their visas and escorted them to the airport. They would be the last to go to Spain.

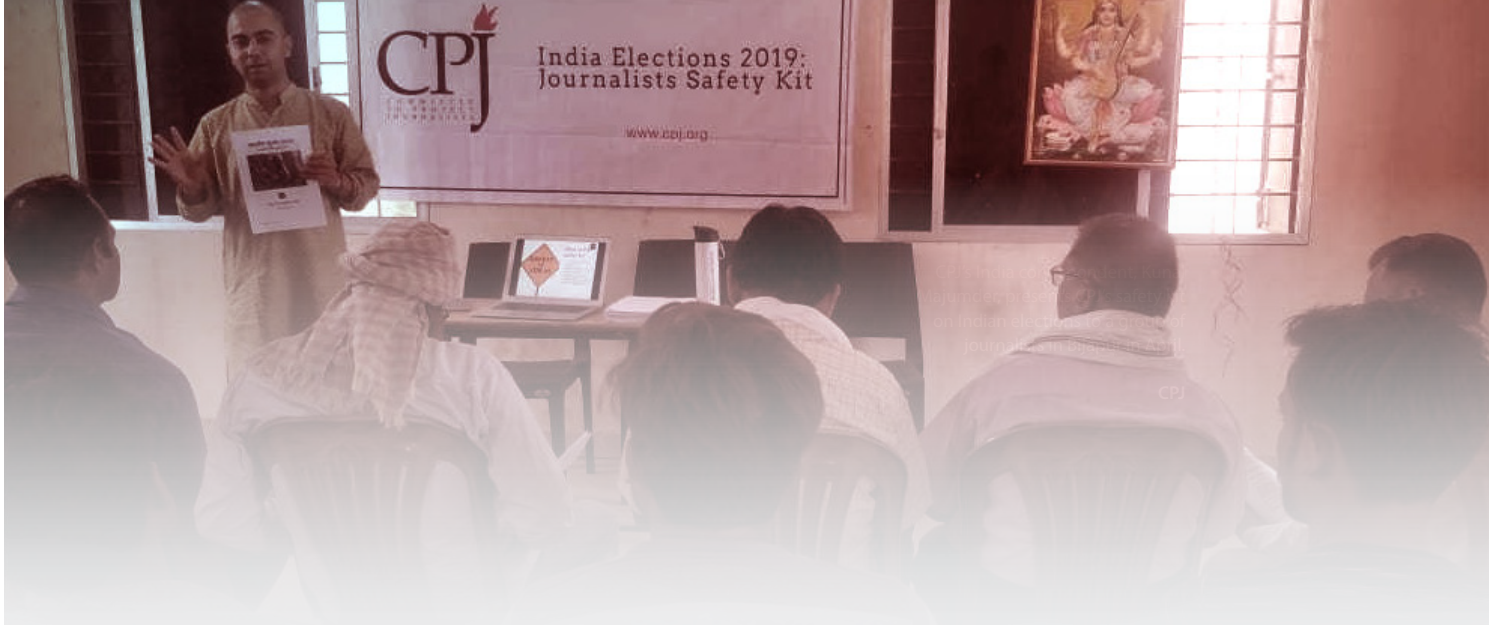
At the Madrid airport in July, al-Rafaa'i held his children for the first time in a year. The family posed for a selfie, both kids sticking their tongues out for the camera. They were joyously far from the war in Syria, together, and safe.

Eleven Syrian journalists, including Nour al-Rifaa'i, left for new lives in Spain in May 2019. They posed together at Istanbul's airport with CPJ's MENA representative. Faces have been blurred for security reasons.



CPJ's India correspondent, Kunal Majumder, presents CPJ's safety kit on Indian elections to a group of journalists in Bijapur in April.

CPJ



Journalists in Abuja report on a press briefing on election issues, including press freedom violations.

CPJ/Jonathan Rozen



Linking elections to press freedom

Two months before South Africans cast ballots in May's national elections, an opposition political party's leader took aim at veteran journalist and political analyst Karima Brown, posting her cellphone number on Twitter and prompting a flood of rape and death threats. Days before the vote, five armed men broke into the offices of a Zulu-language newspaper and stole equipment, spoiling the outlet's plans for a special election edition. Following election day, a reporter was arrested for alleged election fraud after exposing systemic flaws that enabled double voting.

Covering elections is difficult and dangerous work for journalists around the world, including in well-established

democracies like South Africa. The difficulty is a serious threat to press freedom and to democracy itself.

That's why CPJ launched a three-part initiative to support journalists and leverage political transitions to push for reform. Already in 2019, we have worked with journalists covering elections in India, Guatemala, Nigeria, and South Africa. "It was enormously helpful," said Nicky Gulens, an editor at *City Press* in Johannesburg. "We are going to do this in a very different way from now on."

At right, check out some highlights of what CPJ did in 2019.

Safety

CPJ created specialized safety kits and hosted safety workshops for journalists covering elections in South Africa, India, and Guatemala, to help them mitigate digital, physical, and psychological risks.

Indian journalists endure attacks, harassment on- and offline, and government restrictions. Ahead of India's rolling elections this year, CPJ held safety workshops in shiny city newsrooms and steaming village "journalist halls" in three regions. More than 150 journalists showed up for presentations of the kit, and thousands more received it thanks to enthusiastic sharing in journalist WhatsApp groups.

CPJ traveled to three South African cities to distribute the safety kit and provide in-person training.

Research

CPJ is reporting on election-related interference of journalists' work. We were on the ground in Nigeria, ahead of the presidential and state-level elections in February and March, to document the detentions, harassment, and assault of journalists all over the country and worked with members of local civil society groups and press freedom organizations. We covered the Nigerian authorities' shutdown in February of Jay FM radio station for its coverage of the elections and the arrest of a senior staff member.

In South Africa, we were international election observers—a first for CPJ—and also monitored press freedom violations in partnership with several local groups.

Advocacy

Elections that lead to political transitions offer opportunities to drive fundamental improvements to the media environment, so CPJ is also engaging with newly elected leaders.

Last year, CPJ advocacy in Ecuador helped persuade the country's new president, Lenín Moreno, to abandon a repressive communications law and champion press-friendly reforms. This year, we see more opportunities: In Guatemala, we will push August's runoff winner to implement and fund a long-promised federal protection mechanism for journalists. And in Tunisia, amid a transition to democracy and official promises to uphold press freedom, we are pushing leaders to end journalist detentions and state-of-emergency laws that deny Tunisians basic rights, including freedom of expression.



Working Together For Impact

CPJ works closely with local and international groups all over the world, from media outlets to nonprofit organizations, to uphold the rights of journalists and promote press freedom.

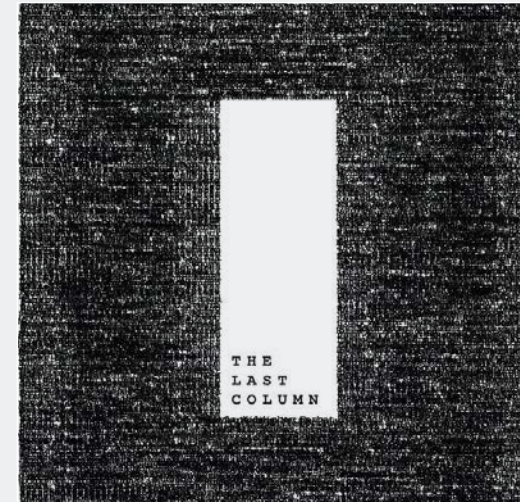
The reason for this is simple. In this current climate, the need to unite in defense of press freedom has never been greater. And, by working together, we can make sure our collective voice is heard all over the world.

Here, some CPJ partnerships in 2019 that helped raise awareness of the importance of a free press.



In March, a group of media outlets led by *Forbes* magazine launched the One Free Press Coalition to push back against the increasing dangers to press freedom globally. CPJ and the International Women's Media Foundation are the coalition's partners.

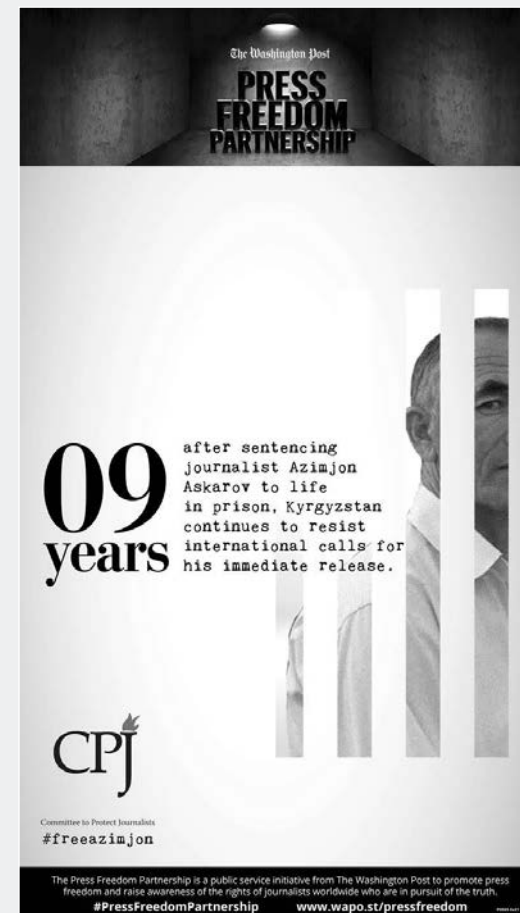
Each month, CPJ and IWMF compile a list of the "10 Most Urgent" cases of journalists, which the coalition highlights to its global audience. In August, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and Tanzanian freelance reporter Azory Gwanda topped the list. For more on the coalition, check out its website at onefreepresscoalition.com.



The Last Column

Along with News Corp., the Dow Jones Foundation, and HarperCollins Publishers, CPJ in March launched "The Last Column," a book, digital campaign, and series of events that highlight the human cost of reporting the news.

The book features the final works of 24 journalists killed in relation to their work, including Jamal Khashoggi, the *Washington Post* columnist who was killed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018; Marie Colvin, a journalist for *The Sunday Times* who was killed in Syria in 2012; and Daniel Pearl, the reporter for *The Wall Street Journal* who was kidnapped and killed in Pakistan in 2002.



The Washington Post Press Freedom Partnership

This year, CPJ was an inaugural member of The Washington Post Press Freedom Partnership, an initiative to promote press freedom and raise awareness of the rights of journalists all over the world with partner organizations.

In July, *The Washington Post* printed an advertisement highlighting the case of Azimjon Askarov, a journalist serving a life sentence in Kyrgyzstan. Askarov was convicted in 2010 on charges including incitement to ethnic hatred and complicity in murder. In 2012, CPJ honored him with its International Press Freedom Award and continues to call for his release.



Shawkan hugs his family at his home in Cairo the day he is released from prison.

AP/Amr Nabil

#FreeThePress: Keeping Shawkan's story alive

Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abou Zeid, known as Shawkan, was detained in August 2013 while photographing clashes between Egyptian security forces and supporters of ousted President Mohamed Morsi in Cairo. For years, he was held in pretrial detention. Between 2013 and 2017, he had 64 court hearings, including 19 in 2017 alone.

For years, CPJ advocated publicly and privately for his release. Finally, in March 2019, Shawkan was freed, but he must still report to a police station every night. CPJ continues to advocate for Shawkan's freedom.

Below, a look at how we got here.

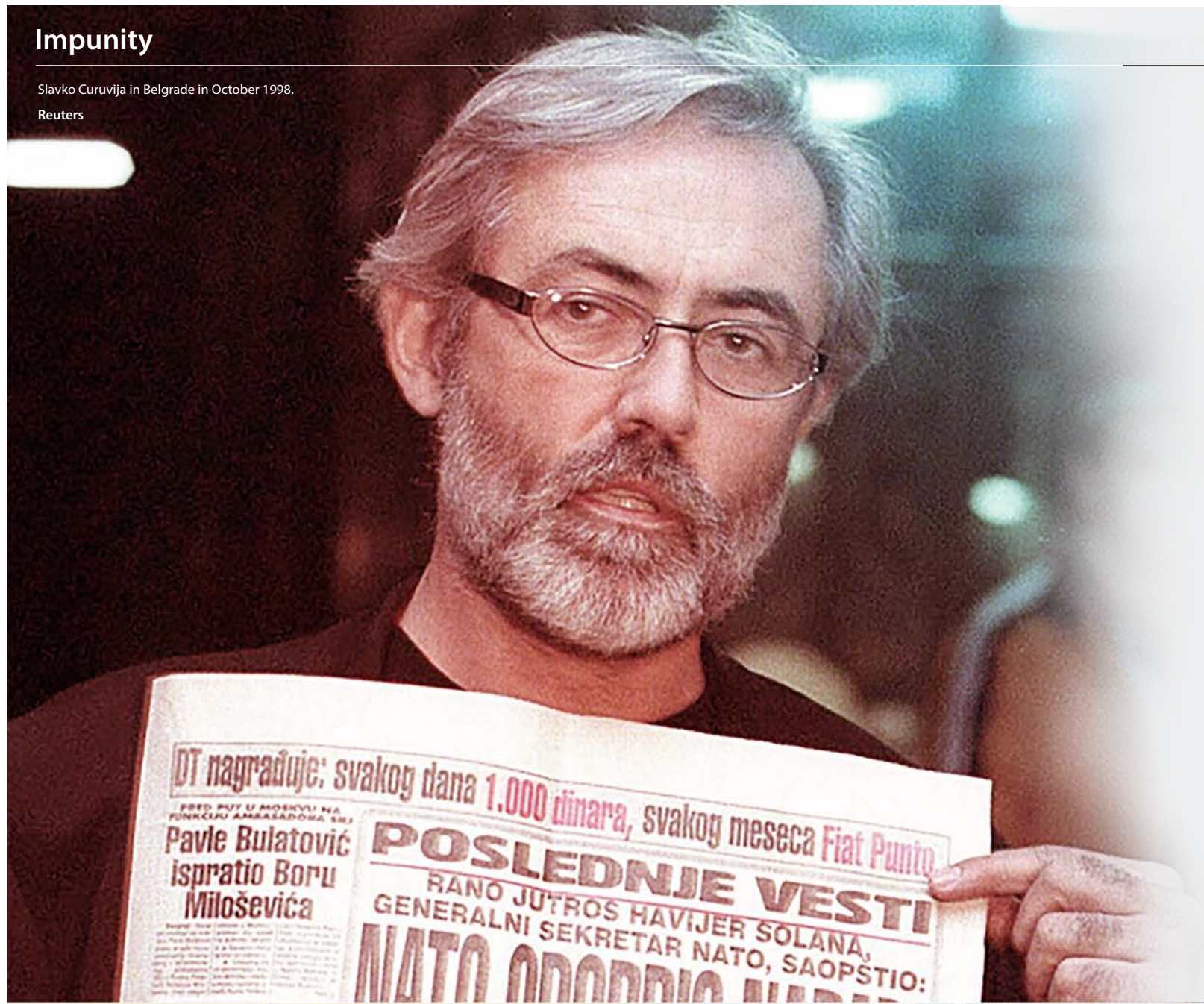
- August 14, 2013** Shawkan is detained in Cairo.
- December 18, 2013** CPJ's prison census features Shawkan.
- April 29, 2014** CPJ's "Ten journalists to free from prison" includes Shawkan.
- November 6, 2014** CPJ co-produces a documentary featuring Shawkan.
- February 2015** CPJ raises Shawkan's imprisonment with Egyptian leaders.
- March 26, 2015** CPJ co-launches a "Press Uncuffed" campaign that features Shawkan.
- April 6, 2015** Shawkan writes a letter to mark his 600th day behind bars.
- May 14, 2015** Shawkan appears before a judge for the first time.
- September 24, 2015** CPJ calls on the Egyptian president to free Shawkan.
- August 23, 2016** CPJ co-hosts an exhibit featuring Shawkan's work.
- November 22, 2016** CPJ honors Shawkan at its awards gala. #FreeShawkan trends on Twitter.
- January 26, 2017** CPJ's #FreeThePress campaign includes Shawkan.
- October 19, 2017** Shawkan's health deteriorates.
- July 27, 2018** CPJ advocacy with U.S. Congress leads to a member urging Shawkan's freedom.
- September 8, 2018** Shawkan is convicted of murder and sentenced to five years.
- March 4, 2019** Shawkan is freed from prison, but must appear daily at a police station.

#FreeShawkan



Slavko Curuvija in Belgrade in October 1998.

Reuters



Justice, one case at a time

Nearly 20 years—to the day—after Slavko Curuvija was killed in front of his home in Serbia, a court convicted four individuals for his murder.

The 51-year-old was the owner of *Dnevni Telegraph*, the first privately owned daily newspaper in Serbia, and of the weekly magazine *Evropljanin*. His murder on April 5, 1999, was the first to target a member of the independent Serbian media.

A few months before he was killed, Curuvija had testified before the U.S. Congress, questioning the rule of President Slobodan Milosevic. The month before he died, he was sentenced to five months in jail for spreading false information, but was appealing the sentence. Days before his murder, state television broadcast accusations against him, saying that he supported NATO's attack on Yugoslavia.

CPJ kept Curuvija's murder in the spotlight over the years. In November 1999, we wrote a public letter to Yugoslavia's minister of information to express concern at the lack of progress in the investigation. In a letter to the prime minister in 2005, we again urged justice in his case. In 2007, we reported on threats to journalists against the backdrop of impunity in his murder.

We consistently featured Curuvija in chapters on Serbia for our annual publication *Attacks on the Press*. In 2013, we included him in a blog post, "1,000 deaths: Journalists who gave their lives," and we featured Curuvija in "Road to Justice," a 2014 report on impunity in journalist murders worldwide.

In 2014—nearly 15 years after his murder—the Serbian prosecutor's office identified four suspects, all of whom had ties to state security services. In 2015, the trial began. Radomir Marković, former head of Serbian state security, and Milan Radonjić, former head of the Belgrade spy agency, were charged with instigating the murder, and Miroslav Kurak, a secret service agent, and Ratko Romic, a secret service agent and operations chief under Milosevic, were identified as the hitmen.

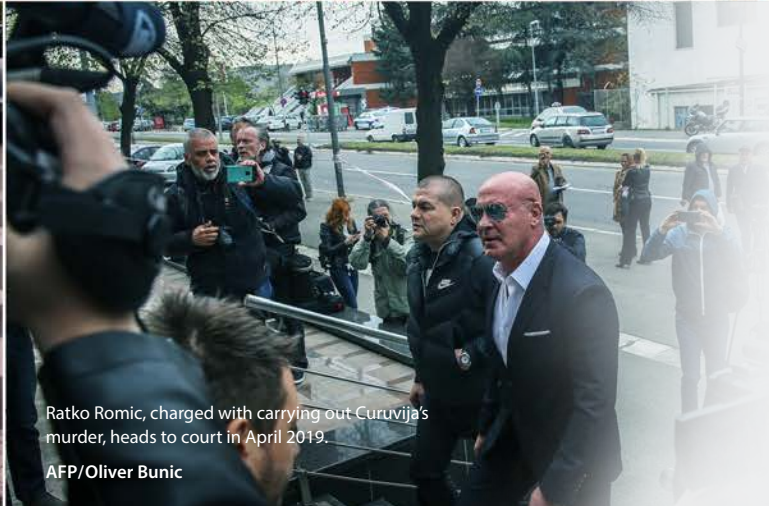
On April 11, 2019, Marković and Radonjić were each sentenced to 30 years in prison, and Kurak and Romic were given 20-year sentences.

Winning convictions in journalist murders takes years—in this case, decades—but each step toward justice matters. CPJ continues to fight impunity all over the world, one case at a time.



Milan Radonjić, charged with instigating Curuvija's murder, leaves court in April 2019.

AFP/Oliver Bunic



Ratko Romic, charged with carrying out Curuvija's murder, heads to court in April 2019.

AFP/Oliver Bunic

International Press Freedom Awards

CPJ is proud to honor these brave journalists with its 2019 International Press Freedom Awards.

They have faced legal and physical threats, online harassment, and imprisonment in their pursuit of the news. Through their outstanding work, they continue to push the frontiers of press freedom.



Lucía Pineda Ubau and Miguel Mora, Nicaragua

Lucía Pineda Ubau is the news director of 100% Noticias, a leading independent media outlet in Nicaragua. Miguel Mora is the director and founder of the outlet. The two have faced harassment and threats as a result of their reporting on the country's political crisis. The outlet is banned from broadcasting in Nicaragua, and the government has seized its studio and equipment.

In December 2018, Pineda and Mora were arrested and charged with inciting violence and hate and promoting terrorism, allegations CPJ deemed absurd. They were held under surveillance and in isolation for most of their time in prison. In June, following months of advocacy by CPJ and other groups, they were released.

100% Noticias



Maxence Melo Mubyazi, Tanzania

Maxence Melo Mubyazi is the owner and co-founder of Jamii Forums, a East and Central African website and discussion forum that acts as a secure whistleblowing platform and promotes accountability and transparency in Tanzania. The website, a source of breaking news, hosts debates about topics such as graft in the public sector.

Authorities have repeatedly harassed Melo, a champion for online freedom of expression and internet governance. In 2016, Tanzanian security forces raided Jamii Forums' office, detained Melo for eight days, and charged him under the country's 2015 Cybercrimes Act. In 2017, Melo appeared in court 81 times. Today, he continues to fight in Tanzanian court to clear his name.

Jamii Forums



Neha Dixit, India

Neha Dixit, an Indian freelance reporter, has covered politics, gender, and social justice in print, TV, and online media for more than a decade. She began her career at *Tehelka* magazine and then joined the special investigation team at *India Today* newsmagazine.

Dixit investigates and reports on crucial issues including extrajudicial killings by police. In 2016, she wrote a story that accused members of a right-wing nationalist group of trafficking dozens of girls. After the story was published, she was charged with defamation and threatened with physical attacks, rape, and death. She told CPJ in 2019 that she receives up to 300 abusive messages a day.

Rajni George



Patrícia Campos Mello, Brazil

Patrícia Campos Mello is a reporter and columnist at the Brazilian daily *Folha de S. Paulo* and an international correspondent. She has reported on human rights and public health all over the world.

In 2018, in response to her reporting on Brazil's general election, Campos Mello was threatened online and over the phone, and social media users shared doctored photos and fake news stories about her. She was forced to cancel all her public appearances for a time, and her newspaper hired her a bodyguard. The attack on Campos Mello was one of the most visible cases of doxxing in an election cycle in which dozens of journalists were harassed for their reporting.

Marcos Villas Boas

2018 Supporters

The Committee to Protect Journalists is extremely grateful to the individuals, corporations, and foundations whose generosity makes our work possible. We also extend our gratitude to the many contributors who supported CPJ with gifts under \$1,000, not listed here due to space limitations. This list includes donors who made gifts from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2018.

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Statement of financial position as of December 31, 2018

(with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2017)

Assets	12/31/2018	12/31/2017
Cash and cash equivalents	\$4,652,630	\$3,479,150
Pledges receivable, net (Note 3)	3,881,109	3,684,459
Investments (Note 4)	0	5,497
Prepaid expenses and other receivable	112,123	123,897
Investments held for term endowment (Note 4 and 6)	377,027	437,846
Investments held for long term endowment (Note 4 and 8)	12,433,227	13,327,915
Fixed assets (net of accumulated depreciation) (Note 5)	214,031	267,647
Security deposit	82,245	82,211
Total assets	\$21,752,392	\$21,408,622
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$564,797	\$436,689
Deferred rent	34,856	90,785
Conditional contribution	400,000	400,000
Total liabilities	999,653	927,474
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions	4,405,203	3,270,171
With donor restrictions		
Restricted for specific purpose and time	4,291,287	4,066,963
Donor restricted endowment	12,056,249	13,144,014
Total net assets with donor restrictions	16,347,536	17,210,977
Total net assets	20,752,739	20,481,148
Total liabilities and net assets	\$21,752,392	\$21,408,622

Complete audited financial statements, including auditors' notes, are available at CPJ's website, <https://cpj.org>

Statement of functional expenses for the year ended December 31, 2018

(with comparative totals for the year ended December 31, 2017)

	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Cost of Direct Benefits to Donors	Total Expenses 12/31/18	Total Expenses 12/31/17
Salaries	\$2,424,882	\$330,803	\$470,109		\$3,225,794	\$2,957,703
Payroll taxes and benefits	680,810	137,731	168,752		987,293	855,464
Professional fees (including in-kind)	1,394,525	358,132	190,551		1,943,208	1,688,762
Occupancy	316,923	136,049	59,918		512,890	454,591
Travel	402,652	59,645	91,673		553,970	470,458
Grants	312,130				312,130	203,763
Office supplies and maintenance	3,740	56,378	574		60,692	85,447
Telephone and Internet	12,375	34,031	110		46,516	56,358
Publications, printing and postage	7,526	4,040	64,770		76,336	126,218
Food, facility, and entertainment				395,445	395,445	
Insurance	36,703	4,955	7,614		49,272	57,281
Fees	3,302	26,193	56,807		86,302	68,416
Depreciation	96,309	13,005	18,861		128,175	101,151
Other	82,526	34,731	57,541		174,798	411,994
Total	\$5,774,403	\$1,195,693	\$1,187,280	395,445	\$8,552,821	\$7,537,606
Less: Cost of direct benefits to donors				(395,445)	(395,445)	
Total Expenses	\$5,774,403	\$1,195,693	\$1,187,280	\$0	\$8,157,376	\$7,537,606



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