

Attacks on the Press in 2010

A Worldwide Survey by the Committee to Protect Journalists

Preface by Riz Khan



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*A Worldwide Survey by the Committee
to Protect Journalists*



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

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At a Mexico City protest against anti-press violence, a poster recalls the slain reporter Valentín Valdés Espinosa. (AP/Marco Ugarte)

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A Worldwide Survey by the Committee to Protect Journalists

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In Venezuela, a protest against government censorship. (AFP/Miguel Gutierrez)



Preface

by Riz Khan

It's a double-edged sword. Technology has made the life of journalists so much easier and yet so much more difficult. Even in the least-developed countries, where simple infrastructure such as paved road is a luxury, access to mobile phones, the portability of satellite broadcasting systems, the growth of delivery platforms, and the popularity of 24-hour news channels enable a news story to make it into the homes of hundreds of millions of people instantly.

Which is a problem for those who want to control the flow of information. Reporting is hard to manipulate when the information can be on television, radio, and the Web before anyone else can get their hands on the message. So what are the options if this reporting is to be stopped?

More and more, intimidation has become the tool of choice: Scare journalists into staying away from a story; make sure they understand their interference is not welcome. A few dead bodies along the way should help. Perhaps nowhere is that more clear than in Mexico, where drug-related bloodshed has encompassed thousands of lives, including those of many journalists. To drive home their brutal point, gangs dump beheaded and mutilated bodies on roadsides. When that isn't enough, spraying the offices of media outlets with machine gunfire adds a little emphasis.

In reality, it's not so much the high-profile international journalists who face the greatest dangers, although Iraq and the former Yugoslavia took their tolls, including the life of my friend Terry Lloyd. International correspondents are often visitors who don't file on a daily basis and aren't as deep into the stories or issues. They can simply be refused an entry visa into a country. The true champions, resisting the threats and pressures every day, are the local reporters.

I was impressed recently to hear the story of Brazilian newspaper journalist Daniela Arbex, who has that rare persistence to follow through

on a story despite extreme difficulties and threats. She has won numerous awards for stories in the *Minas Tribune* that, among other things, exposed the neglect of rape victims, the abuse of mentally ill people, and the enlistment of schoolchildren in the drug trade. In each case, her reporting changed government policies. A different challenge faces Amira Hass, an Israeli journalist and daughter of two Holocaust survivors who lives and reports from Gaza and the West Bank. She faces vitriolic condemnation from Israelis for daring to criticize her country's policies in the Palestinian territories—although she has also had some pretty tough words for Palestinian leadership, too. In spite of the conditions she faces, Hass continues to challenge any abuse of power.

As we know, the ruling authorities pose the greatest threat in many places, targeting news sources directly or imposing restrictive rules that make the job of reporting important stories that much harder. Few countries are an exception to this rule; every government would love to control the flow of information.

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*A price for showing missiles not only being
fired but landing.*

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When it comes to targeting journalists, fingers are often pointed at the “usual suspects,” such as Iran and Egypt. But it goes much further: International organizations have made similar judgments about Sri Lanka, Somalia, and others. My own TV channel, Al-Jazeera, has been the target of more governments around the world than any news channel in history. There's a price to pay for speaking out, for showing the missiles not only being fired but showing them landing, to quote a colleague.

So what happens in an era of blogging, tweeting, social media, and citizen journalism, where anyone can be a “reporter” or mobilize support for an idea? What does that do to the flow of information and who controls it?

That is, perhaps, the biggest game-changer. For journalists, it blurs the lines between official and unofficial media, making it harder for established news organizations to distance themselves from what might be perceived as politically biased viewpoints. It has particularly affected news media in the United States, where traditionally neutral channels now feature more programming and personalities with a clear and usually outspoken point of view. The raising of the public temperature through aggressive commentary may help ratings, but it doesn't necessarily help journalists do their jobs effectively.

There is also the risk, in an increasingly networked world, of the smallest offhand comment turning into an unexpected landmine. Leading media figures such as White House veteran Helen Thomas, longtime CNN journalist Octavia Nasr, CNN's Rick Sanchez, and NPR's Juan Williams have all discovered that offering an opinion can cost one a job. In each case, they spoke outside their own, regular media affiliation (and their comments reflected rather different viewpoints), but overall it added to that blurring of lines between traditional news and the brave new world of socially networked commentary.

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Aggressive commentary helps ratings but hinders journalists.

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Given the power of social networking—which has brought down governments, mobilized opposition, and created demands for accountability—it is understandable that many authorities feel a threat to their control. Witness Google's tussle with the government of China. Globally, bloggers are already facing the same hazards that traditional journalists have always endured: intimidation, imprisonment, torture, and even death.

The situation is made more complicated by the traditional media's willingness to invite more and more participation from the public: "Send us your e-mails," "Contact us through Twitter," "Share with us on Facebook," "Just text us." The old world is trying to meet the new one head-on, but where does it leave fair and balanced reporting by trained journalists, and how can media outlets safeguard their neutrality and credibility?

This leads to my final question: At what point does the growing volume of public commentary render media outlets and their journalists even greater targets? As I said, it's a double-edged sword and, in this case, everyone is in danger of getting cut.

Riz Khan is host of "Riz Khan" and "Riz Khan's One on One" on Al-Jazeera English.

International Institutions Fail To Defend Press Freedom

by Joel Simon

UNESCO is the primary entity within the United Nations dedicated to the defense of press freedom. Yet in 2010, journalism and human rights organizations were forced to launch an international campaign to stop UNESCO from presenting a prize honoring one of Africa's most notorious press freedom abusers.

In 2008, UNESCO accepted a \$3 million donation from President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea to underwrite an annual prize in life sciences. For more than three decades, Obiang has ruled the tiny West African nation with an iron hand. Although an oil boom has given Equatorial Guinea one of the highest per-capita incomes in Africa, massive corruption and mismanagement have reduced the country's standard of living to one of the lowest on the continent. Journalists in Equatorial Guinea face systematic harassment, censorship, and detention. CPJ named Equatorial Guinea one of the world's 10 most censored countries in a 2006 survey.

International human rights and press freedom organizations were outraged by plans for an Obiang prize. CPJ joined a coalition to fight against it and rallied opposition from international press freedom organizations and prominent journalists, including winners of UNESCO's own Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. Plans for an Obiang prize were finally defeated in October when UNESCO's executive board said it would not go forward without the consensus of its members, which will not be reached given the strong opposition expressed by several of them.

This was a victory, but the battle should never have been fought. The fact is that many international governmental organizations created to defend press freedom are consistently failing to fulfill their mission. As with the Obiang controversy, human rights and press freedom groups are expending time, resources, and energy ensuring these institutions do not veer widely from their mandate.

Take the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, or OSCE. The 56-member intergovernmental organization, created during the Cold War to track security conditions in Europe, is charged with the defense of press freedom and human rights. Yet in 2007, Kazakhstan, one of the region's worst press freedom violators, was elected chairman of the organization. The country's chairmanship was delayed for a year so Astana could implement promised press freedom reforms, including amending its repressive laws. Kazakhstan not only failed to fulfill its promises, it introduced restrictive new measures—yet it still assumed OSCE leadership in 2010 without hindrance.

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*The OSCE stands by as Kazakhstan
undermines its core principles.*

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A CPJ report released in September found that attacks on Kazakh journalists continued before and during the country's OSCE chairmanship. A journalist and a prominent human rights activist were jailed under abysmal conditions. Two critical newspapers were shuttered. A highly restrictive Internet law was passed, crippling development of a critical blogosphere. Under a broadly worded privacy law enacted just as Kazakhstan assumed OSCE leadership, journalists can be jailed for up to five years for reporting on "an individual's life." As the CPJ report noted, "By disregarding human rights and press freedom at home, Kazakhstan compromised the organization's international reputation as a guardian of these rights, undermined the OSCE's relevance and effectiveness, and thus devalued human rights in all OSCE states."

In October, a CPJ delegation traveled to OSCE headquarters in Vienna to urge organization officials to address Kazakhstan's poor press freedom record at a summit set for late year. In presenting its findings, CPJ noted that OSCE nations had agreed in the Moscow Commitment of 1991 that human rights and fundamental freedoms are a collective concern, not simply an individual state's internal affair. When the summit was held, however, press freedom and human rights went unaddressed.

CPJ and other press freedom organizations have sought to enlist U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the global fight against impunity in journalist murders. In April 2007, a CPJ delegation met with Ban, who expressed admiration for journalists and pledged to back U.N. efforts to support their work. Over the next several years, Ban made a number of supportive statements, but his approach has been far from consistent. The secretary-general squandered a critical opportunity to defend press

freedom when he failed to congratulate Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, the jailed human rights activist and journalist. As the Chinese government launched a global campaign against the award, Ban apparently succumbed to pressure and set a disappointing example for the entire U.N. system.

Intergovernmental organizations often consist of a political structure of member states and a legal structure that adjudicates the applicability of international treaties that protect human rights and press freedom. These legal structures are served, in turn, by special rapporteurs for freedom of expression, whose role is to advocate within the institutions and ensure press freedom mandates are upheld.

In many instances, these special rapporteurs have performed with distinction. U.N. Special Rapporteur Frank LaRue and Catalina Botero, special rapporteur for freedom of expression for the Organization of American States (OAS), have criticized and drawn attention to press freedom abuses. A joint mission by LaRue and Botero to Mexico in August attracted widespread attention to rampant anti-press violence there.

Some regional legal bodies also have positive records. The European Court of Human Rights, for example, has issued a number of significant rulings in press freedom cases from Russia and Azerbaijan. In an

An empty chair for Liu at the Nobel ceremony, and a lack of support from international institutions. (Reuters)



important 2010 decision in the case of *Sanoma Uitgevers B.V. v. the Netherlands*, the court put strict limits on the ability of governments to search newsrooms. CPJ signed on to an amicus brief in that case.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has ordered member states to provide direct protection to at-risk journalists, and it has provided effective mediation when the rights of journalists have been violated. Over the years, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has issued key decisions supporting press freedom, including a landmark ruling that struck down a criminal defamation conviction in Costa Rica.

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*As Venezuela restricts press freedom,
a paralyzed OAS is silent.*

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These systems, however, break down at the political level. The OAS, which has been paralyzed by ideological battles in Latin America, rarely speaks out on press freedom violations. As press freedom is being legislated out of existence in Venezuela, OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza has failed to confront the government of President Hugo Chávez Frías. And when Azerbaijan failed to comply with a European Court order to release editor Eynulla Fatullayev—a 2009 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee imprisoned on fabricated charges—the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers, the body tasked with ensuring compliance with court rulings, issued only a cautious reprimand to Baku. It did not adopt a resolution for sanctions against Azerbaijan as penalty for non-compliance, despite its mandate to do so. Azerbaijan shrugged off the rebuke and continued to hold Fatullayev.

Meanwhile, journalists under fire in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa expect no support from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Arab League, or the African Union (AU). The AU is based in the capital of one of Africa’s worst press freedom abusers, Ethiopia, and the organization’s human rights body is based in the Gambia, a country where journalists are jailed, murdered, and disappeared. Despite the existence of a special rapporteur for free expression, the AU has been largely silent in the face of major press freedom violations in these countries.

Intergovernmental organizations are made of governments, of course, so the resistance of powerful international actors poses a challenge. China’s bullying efforts to suppress participation in the Nobel ceremony in Oslo illustrates its willingness to exert power to limit the influence of both

international organizations and national governments that speak out for press freedom. China and Cuba have reacted aggressively when UNESCO has honored journalists from their countries with the Guillermo Cano prize.

The European Union, while espousing support for press freedom, is often unwilling to take a confrontational role. In the debate over the Obiang prize within UNESCO, for example, the EU seemed to modulate its opposition to avoid antagonizing African countries that supported the award. While the EU took steps to isolate Cuba after the 2003 crackdown on dissidents and the press, it was Spain working with the Catholic Church that negotiated the detainees' release. Seventeen jailed Cuban journalists were released in 2010, although four remained in prison in late year.

The influence of the United States, which has traditionally defended press freedom within international organizations, has been diminished. There are many reasons for this, ranging from the reduced influence of U.S. media in the global arena to the lingering resentment in many parts of the world over U.S. human rights abuses, including the use of torture. The response of U.S. government officials to the release of classified documents by the anti-secrecy organization WikiLeaks has further complicated the issue.

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*Rights established in international law are
not protected in practice.*

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In one telling example, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met on the sidelines of the OSCE summit with Raushan Yesergepova, wife of a Kazakh editor jailed for divulging state secrets. He had published government memos showing the security service was exerting undue influence in a local tax case. The U.S. support was blunted, however. When a reporter at the summit asked about WikiLeaks' release of classified State Department cables, Clinton condemned it as an illegal breach of security. Later, as Yesergepova relayed to us, a senior Kazakh official scolded the editor's wife: "Didn't you hear what Clinton just said? State secrets must never be revealed. It's dangerous and wrong to do so."

Today's sad reality is that while international law guarantees the right to free expression, journalists can rely on few international institutions to defend that right. While nongovernmental organizations have filled the void by challenging press freedom abusers and raising concerns internationally, these groups are spending an increasing amount of time monitoring the behavior of international governmental organizations that should

be their allies in the press freedom struggle.

It is not acceptable to shunt all responsibility for protection of press freedom to special rapporteurs, who are often politically isolated and underfunded. The political leaders of every international institution—from the United Nations to the AU, the OAS to the Council of Europe and the OSCE—need to speak out forcefully for press freedom and push back against member states who seek to block them from fulfilling this responsibility. They also need to work aggressively to enforce legal rulings. Journalists working in dangerous conditions feel isolated and abandoned by the very international institutions created to protect their rights. As this book documents, 145 journalists were jailed and 44 journalists were killed worldwide in 2010. Each of these violations represents an opportunity for international institutions to demand justice.

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

Exposing the Internet's Shadowy Assailants

by Danny O'Brien

For the past decade, those who used the Internet to report the news might have assumed that the technological edge was in their favor. But online journalists now face more than just the standard risks to those working in dangerous conditions. They find themselves victims of new attacks unique to the new medium. From online surveillance of writers through customized malicious software to “just in time” censorship that can wipe controversial news sites off the Internet at the most inconvenient moment, the online tools to attack the press are getting smarter and spreading further.

In March, Andrew Jacobs, a correspondent working for *The New York Times* in Beijing, peered for the first time into the obscure corners of his Yahoo e-mail account settings. Under the “mail forwarding” tab was an e-mail address he had never seen before. That other e-mail address had been receiving copies of all of his incoming e-mails for months. His account had been hacked.

Jacobs' experience as a journalist in China is not unusual. Over the past two years, other members of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China (FCCC) have been the victims of a series of targeted computer hacks. In 2009, carefully crafted e-mails from an elaborately constructed false identity—“Pam Bourdon,” economics editor of the *Straits Times*—were sent to their local news assistants via unpublicized e-mail addresses. If the assistants opened an attached document, they were shown exactly what one might expect from the e-mail's cover explanation—a detailed list of dates that “Bourdon” would be available during a Beijing visit. Simultaneously, a hidden program capable of taking over and spying on the recipient's computer would launch. Control of the assistant's computer—and that of anyone who opened the forwarded document—would pass to remote servers controlled by unknown parties.

In early 2010, Jacobs and FCCC members suffered another series of hacking attacks on their Yahoo Web-based e-mail accounts. After revealing these attacks in April, the FCCC found its own website brought down in a distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) assault, a form of censorship by information overload in which hundreds of thousands of computers are coordinated to send or demand data from a single website, causing its connection to the Internet to choke or its server to crash. The attacking computers are part of a “botnet,” ordinary home computers that have been taken over using malware just like the one installed by the Pam Bourdon e-mail, and remotely controlled en masse from afar.

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Surveillance threatens the lives and liberty of reporters worldwide.

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When CPJ exchanged e-mails with Jacobs later in the year, he seemed philosophical about the degree of surveillance in which he and his Beijing colleagues worked. “Yes, I feel vulnerable,” he wrote, “but I’ve always assumed my e-mail was being read and that my phones are tapped. ... It’s most unfortunate and creepy, but to be honest you just get used to it and communicate accordingly.”

Surveillance and online censorship interfere with the work of international journalists, but they are direct threats to the lives and liberty of local reporters worldwide. Illegal online surveillance has led to the incarceration of dozens of local journalists, most notably the Chinese editor Shi Tao, whose Yahoo e-mail activity was used as evidence in 2005 to sentence him to 10 years’ imprisonment on antistate charges. Roughly half the people on CPJ’s 2010 census of imprisoned journalists conducted their work online, either as independent writers or as editors of Internet news sites.

The Chinese government has traditionally monitored foreign journalists very closely, from their electronic activity to their phone calls and movements. The state employs the world’s most sophisticated technology to watch and suppress its citizens. But governments with lesser reputations for understanding technology are now using increasingly sophisticated tools. During the 2009 election protests in Iran, Western commentators emphasized how Internet-savvy the protesters were, drawing an implicit contrast to the regime. But when *Newsweek* reporter Maziar

Bahari was arrested and tortured in Evin Prison, his interrogator was quick to demand his Facebook and e-mail passwords to comb through for contacts. In December of that year, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Iran had created a 12-member military unit to track people “spreading lies and insults” about the regime online.

Iranian journalists working in Europe have reported hacking attacks similar to those detailed by Jacobs and the FCCC. One exiled journalist described receiving threats containing details that could only have been collected from authorities intercepting instant-message conversations. Another, Manuchehr Honarmand, exiled editor of the website *Khandaniha*, told the *National Journal* that his website had been disabled three times by hackers. Omid Habibinia, who worked for the BBC Persian service and state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, had fake Facebook accounts created in his name, in order, he believed, to deceive his sources into communicating with their opponents.

The breadth and variety of online attacks on reporters in 2010 demonstrates that they were not the exclusive domain of governments willing or able to spend millions on military cyber-commands. Even the poorest of

In this photo taken by an undercover journalist for the Democratic Voice of Burma, an online, exile-run news agency, Buddhist monks lead protests against the Burmese military junta. (DVB/AP)



authoritarian states were able to marshal, or at least benefit from, sophisticated, high-tech attacks against independent media.

The most straightforward of cyber-attacks is government-mandated online censorship: the nationwide blocking of media websites. This practice, long established in countries such as Iran and China, has now spread to countries with some of the smallest Internet usage rates in the world. In May, Rwanda's two primary Internet service providers blocked the online version of the tabloid *Umuvugizi*, the first time the country had blocked any website, according to the Rwandan news agency RNA. The country's Media High Council—which had banned the print edition of the paper, known for its critical coverage of the government—also ruled that publishing *Umuvugizi* online was unlawful. Afghanistan joined the league of countries censoring their citizens' Internet connections with a law

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Nationwide blocking spreads to places with small online audiences.

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passed in June; it quickly began blocking not just the “immoral” sites that the law had singled out, but independent news outlets such as *Benawa*. A Pashto-language site, *Benawa* was blocked after it incorrectly reported that the first vice president, Mohammed Qasim Fahim, had died. (The site corrected the error within a half-hour.) According to the International Telecommunication Union, or ITU, only 4.1 percent of Rwanda's inhabitants use the Internet; in Afghanistan, the figure is less than 3.5 percent.

Individual Internet access is almost nonexistent in Burma, one of the world's most censored countries, but Internet cafés are very popular. A 2008 CPJ report found that Internet café users were routinely circumventing government blocks to visit banned news sites run by exiled journalists. Now, the government appears to be stepping up high-tech attacks on these exile-run news sites. Three exile outlets—*Irrawaddy*, the Mizzima news agency, and the Democratic Voice of Burma—came under DDOS attacks in September, coinciding with the anniversary of the 2007 Saffron Revolution, a series of anti-government protests led by Buddhist monks that was eventually quashed by military force. The attacks recalled earlier efforts but far exceeded them in force, *Irrawaddy* editors told CPJ. The exact origin of the DDOS attacks was unclear, but the effects were not. The exile-run sites, which traditionally provide some of the best firsthand information from

the severely restricted nation, were being blocked not just from Burmese audiences but from international viewership as well.

In Vietnam, more than a quarter of the relatively youthful population was online in 2010, according to ITU data. The country's communist government has made Internet control one of its priorities, and the sophistication of surveillance and attacks on Vietnamese online media now rivals that of any nation in the world, including China. Websites covering news of the Vietnamese government's bauxite mining policies—a controversial issue because of potential ecological damage and the involvement of Chinese companies—were taken offline in early 2010 by DDOS attacks. The thousands of computers used in this attack were controlled by a large domestic botnet of computers infected by a specific kind of malware. Researchers at Google and McAfee, a computer security company, uncovered the source of this infection. A blog post by McAfee's CTO, George Kurtz, described a Trojan concealed in the software downloaded by many Vietnamese residents to allow them to enter native text accents when using Windows computers.

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In Vietnam, accent software carries a debilitating Trojan virus.

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In February, CPJ reported on a direct hacking attack that took down the Vietnamese news site *Blogosin*. The site's editor, Truong Huy San, who also used the name Huy Duc, soon posted a message on a newly created home page to say that he would stop blogging to focus on personal matters. The attack occurred on the same day as the trial and conviction of Tran Khai Thanh Thuy, a writer and editorial board member of the online magazine *To Quoc*. (Thuy was sentenced to three and a half years.) The e-mail accounts of two other bloggers, Pham Thi Hoar and Huy Duc, were hacked at the same time, Human Rights Watch reported.

Can governments like Burma and Vietnam really commandeer and coordinate such elaborate methods of silencing online voices? It is difficult, if not impossible, to trace the true origins of DDOS attacks, the targeted hacking of websites, and even the final destination of secretly forwarded e-mails. Just as the Internet's decentralized and interconnected systems allow journalists the ability to speak anonymously and preserve the anonymity of sources, they can also misdirect and shroud the location of malicious

actors. The best that advocates can do to trace these attacks is deduce their originators from the nature of the target.

When Google revealed in January 2010 that it had experienced a serious security breach—and simultaneously announced that it was ceasing to censor search results on its Chinese search engine—the company implied that Chinese authorities were behind the events. The clue to that connection was in the nature of the targets. Google said that it had “evidence to suggest that a primary goal of the attackers was accessing the Gmail accounts of Chinese human rights activists.” That pointed to Chinese state involvement, even though some of the “command-and-control” computers involved in directing the attacks turned out to be based in Taiwan.

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Petty cyber-criminals do the bidding of repressive governments.

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Did the Chinese military or intelligence services target Google, one of the largest technology companies, and then cheekily use stolen computer access on Taiwanese turf for the task? Do the Burmese authorities plan an annual attack on exile media, and then illegally invade computers in India to do the deed, as the logs recorded by Mizzima indicated?

Ronald Deibert and Nart Villeneuve of the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab, in partnership with computer security consultants at the SecDev Group, have conducted some of the most detailed postmortems of online attacks on the press, including the malware sent to Chinese foreign correspondents, and a forthcoming examination of Burma’s DDOS incidents. Their academic work firmly states that they cannot connect such events directly to the Chinese or Burmese states. Deibert says the evidence they have collected does show, however, that both attacks utilized techniques and strategies common to petty cyber-criminals, including individual “hackers” who work simply for the thrill of bringing down a highly visible, but vulnerable target.

Villeneuve believes that the connection between the operators of these attacks and the regimes that benefit from silencing or intimidating the press doesn’t need to be explicit to be useful to both parties. “My sense is that these criminal operations don’t always have an interest in repressing free speech,” he told CPJ, “but they could see it as advantageous to be on good terms with the state. It’s quid pro quo: You attack Tibetan news sites

for a while, and perhaps law enforcement will turn a blind eye to you stealing credit cards.”

The world Villeneuve describes is all too familiar to any journalist, on-line or off, whose beat encompasses an authoritarian state. Governments do not always have to directly silence the media; they can turn a blind eye as criminal organizations or “patriotic” supporters of the regime do their dirty work for them. Both benefit from suppressing a free press; without independent journalists, corruption and complicity between official powers and shadier forces is unchecked.

The Internet is an incredibly powerful tool for journalists working in repressive regimes, but it alone cannot save the press from censorship, surveillance, and abuse. Those who want to shutter the free press are rapidly gaining the resources and the allies they need to take their battle to the online world. Without the counterbalance of technical and logistical support to independent journalists, the Internet may even disproportionately help their opponents.

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Unwitting third parties are enlisted in abusive practices.

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But advocates can work to mitigate the risk and stop third parties from being enlisted in the abuse.

Ethiopia has a tiny Internet audience, but its government has one of the world’s most oppressive press records. Its security apparatus forced the journalists of the independent newspaper *Addis Neger* to flee the country before the May 2010 national elections. As it does for hundreds of other exiled journalists, the Internet gave *Addis Neger* journalists the opportunity to keep publishing and stay in touch with their homeland. But before *Addis Neger*’s editor, Mesfin Negash, had the chance to create an independent website, he had an incomprehensible setback. His Facebook page, containing all of the online contacts that *Addis Neger* had accumulated, had been deleted by Facebook’s own support staff. For reasons that were never made clear, but could well have involved a coordinated set of complaints by opponents of *Addis Neger*’s critical government coverage, Facebook had deleted Negash’s account and removed his link to an audience of 3,000 fans in Ethiopia and its diaspora.

After CPJ contacted Facebook to emphasize the importance and legitimacy of *Addis Neger's* work, the company restored contact between Negash and his online supporters. Facebook would not explain the deletion except to say it was "a mistake." Within days, Negash was able to send his readers word of his new online newspaper-in-exile at addisnegeronline.com. It came just in time to report on the May elections.

The battle for a free press online is frequently invisible, even for those involved in the conflict. Andrew Jacobs had no idea his e-mail was being monitored until the day he explored his computer settings. Facebook had no knowledge of the vital role its infrastructure was playing in the battle for a free press in Ethiopia. Similarly, many journalists and bloggers making an unsupported foray onto the Internet may have no idea of the threats facing them. CPJ and other advocates have to ensure that journalists are aware of this new generation of attacks—and that everyone knows what they can do to help.

Danny O'Brien is CPJ's San Francisco-based Internet advocacy coordinator. He blogs at cpj.org/internet.



Africa

Africa

ANALYSIS17

From Cameroon to South Africa, authorities are moving aggressively to unmask confidential news sources, criminalize possession of government documents, and retaliate against probing journalists. By Mohamed Keita

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PHOTO CREDITS

Section break: Incumbent Laurent Gbagbo, clinging to power after losing a November presidential runoff in Ivory Coast, talks to reporters at an Abidjan polling station. (AFP/Issouf Sanogo) Analysis: In South Africa, President Jacob Zuma backs legislation that shields public officials from scrutiny. (AFP/Fabrice Coffrini)

Across Africa, Governments Criminalize Investigative Reporting

by Mohamed Keita

Across the continent, the emergence of in-depth reporting and the absence of effective access-to-information laws have set a collision course in which public officials, intent on shielding their activities, are moving aggressively to unmask confidential sources, criminalize the possession of government documents, and retaliate against probing journalists. From Cameroon to Kenya, South Africa to Senegal, government reprisals have resulted in imprisonments, violence, threats, and legal harassment. At least two suspicious deaths—one involving an editor, the other a confidential source—have been reported in the midst of government reprisals against probing news coverage.

The region has entered an era of “new challenges to state power,” in which both citizens and the press are questioning the use of public funds more than at any time in the half-century since many African nations gained independence, said Ayesha Kajee, executive director of the Freedom of Expression Institute, a South Africa-based group that works against censorship and promotes freedom of information. “Particularly through investigative journalism, which highlights corruption, nepotism, and ‘clientele-ism,’ the public sees huge gaps between the majority and the elite,” she said. For now, Kajee said, many governments are intent on suppressing in-depth journalism.

There is much at stake in how the conflict plays out. It’s partly through the news media that international donors hold policy-makers to account over issues such as good governance, human rights, and the management of profits from resource exploitation. But given the dearth of government information available to the public, African journalists are often forced to resort to confidential sources and leaked documents. “When you send interview questions, instead of a response, you get contemptuous silence,” said Jean-Bosco Talla, a 20-year veteran of the press in Cameroon. “All too often, when we publish something, the people concerned will call us not to

deny [the details], but to ask who gave us the information. They threaten us.”

And those threats can turn real.

In February, Laurent Esso, a presidential adviser and chairman of Cameroon’s state oil company SNH, ordered intelligence agents to arrest four newspaper editors after they sent him a series of questions along with a copy of a document that had been leaked to them. Their questions centered on whether 1.3 billion CFA francs (US\$2.6 million) had been improperly paid to three SNH managers as “commissions” in the purchase of a company boat, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. The accompanying document purported to be a June 2008 confidential memorandum signed by Esso that described the payments. One of the journalists, Simon Hervé Nko’o, said security agents tortured him in an effort to

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In Cameroon, questions about a leaked memo lead to jail.

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extract his sources during a week-long, incommunicado detention. He fled into exile, but another editor, Germain Cyrille Ngota Ngota, died while in pretrial detention on charges of “forging” the document. Two other editors spent nine months in pretrial detention on the same charges. Esso did not comment publicly on the allegations, and did not respond to CPJ’s request for comment.

“The management of oil—it’s really opaque. SNH publishes some data, but they disclose only what they wish,” local journalist Roland Tsapi said.

The right to seek, receive, and impart information is enshrined in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa. It’s also recognized by the national constitutions in the overwhelming majority of African nations. Yet only seven African countries—South Africa, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe—have enacted legislation providing public access to government information. Even there, little information is actually given out, according to CPJ research. “Most countries don’t have access-to-information clauses in their constitutions. Alternatively, where you have access-to-information clauses, there is no enabling law that stipulates procedures. Implementation and enforcement become problematic,” said Pansy Tlakula, the African Union’s special rapporteur on freedom of expression.

That sliver of access may shrink further. In March, South African Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele introduced a restrictive “protection of information bill.” Under the bill, officials and state agencies would have unchecked authority to classify public or commercial data as secret based on vaguely defined “national interest” considerations, according to CPJ research and legal experts. National interests would, for instance, include “details of criminal investigations.” The bill would place the burden on journalists to establish “public interest” to justify declassifying any information. Journalists and others found guilty of unauthorized disclosure of official or classified information could face up to 25 years in jail. Critics said the bill, which was pending in late year, came in response to news reports that cited leaked government data showing wasteful spending.

Individual journalists and their sources have been targeted as well. As South Africa prepared to host the 2010 World Cup, the African National Congress-led government, on the defensive about its inability to combat crime, brought tremendous pressure to bear on eTV News Editor Ben Saidi and reporter Mpho Lakaje. The journalists had refused to reveal the identities of two masked men who said in a televised interview in January that they planned to rob tourists during tournament matches in Soweto.

“The police had announced a campaign to fight crime: They said they would fight fire with fire. We decided to interview criminals to find out whether they took the police statements seriously or if it would really be business as usual,” Saidi told CPJ. Authorities, reacting to what they saw as bad publicity, interrogated the journalists for several hours and



publicly threatened to charge them under a provision of the apartheid-era Criminal Procedure Act, a law traditionally used to compel uncooperative witnesses in criminal cases. Saidi said the journalists refused to disclose their sources, but the case came to tragedy. A man who helped set up the interview, Lucky Phungula, was found dead in his home days later, the victim of a poisoning. Police labeled the death a suicide and said Phungula left a note saying he feared being exposed.

Bewyn Petersen, vice chairman of the South African Press Council, said the implications were far-reaching, writing in a *Business Day* column that “it may prevent journalists from having access to similar situations in the future and may even endanger their lives.”

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A story about crime spurs South African police to target sources.

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Not only have regional governments failed to ensure access to public information, they have yet to provide any legal protections for confidential news sources, leaving journalists and their sources open to unchecked intimidation. “While the rest of the world is slowly recognizing the journalistic privilege to protect sources, Africa has made no progress on this front despite the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa calling for precisely such protection back in 2002,” said Peter Noorlander, legal director of the U.K.-based Media Legal Defence Initiative.

Evelyn Groenink, a freelance journalist for local and Dutch media who has investigated the arms trade in southern Africa, said the regional press is increasingly embracing a Western model of challenging journalism—even as many governments cling to the postcolonial era in which they could dominate the flow of information. Conflict, she said, is inevitable.

In Kenya, police brought intense pressure against two investigative journalists who exposed the mishandling of evidence against a suspect wanted in the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

A source in the national police anti-terrorism unit provided Andrew Teyie, investigations editor for *The Star* of Nairobi, and reporter Maina Kamore with information that appeared to implicate top officers in the disappearance of a flash drive containing evidence against Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, a suspected Al-Qaeda member. As is often the case, the source was motivated by frustration and a sense of injustice, Teyie told CPJ. After the June 20, 2009, edition of *The Star* carried the story, the

journalists and two colleagues were summoned by the anti-terrorism unit and subjected to hours-long interrogations.

“They were very specific about the info they wanted. They wanted to find out how we got the story,” said Teyie. After the journalists refused, authorities lodged contempt-of-court charges against Teyie and Kamore based on the story’s identification of three people accused of aiding Mohammed. Authorities argued that the disclosure was prejudicial to any prosecutions they might bring against Mohammed. The case against the journalists remained open in late 2010, according to Teyie. Mohammed was at large.

In Ivory Coast, the government’s reluctance to disclose information concerning a probe into embezzlement of profits that should have gone to local cocoa and coffee producers, led a fledgling investigative newspaper to dig deeper. The government had announced the end of the probe in June, with state television showing prosecutor Raymond Tchimou submitting the report to President Laurent Gbagbo. But the report itself was held back from the public, and Tchimou seemed reluctant to disclose any details. Although two dozen people were imprisoned during the course of the government’s probe, no cases were brought to trial. “It seemed a bit odd, and it drew our curiosity,” Saint-Claver Oula, editor-in-chief of the private weekly *Le Nouveau Courrier*, told CPJ. After the newspaper got a copy of the report from an unnamed source, it published an in-depth piece on July 13 that described the prosecutor’s findings of embezzlement, over-billing, and malfeasance.

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*Governments cling to an era in which they
controlled information.*

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Tchimou immediately summoned Oula, along with *Le Nouveau Courrier* Managing Editor Stéphane Guédé and News Editor Théophile Kouamou, and demanded they reveal their sources or be thrown into prison for “theft” of official documents. When the trio refused, the prosecutor jailed them for 13 days and dispatched police to raid the offices of *Le Nouveau Courrier*. Police came to the newsroom without a search warrant, but carted away Oula’s laptop.

Ivorian military chief Gen. Philippe Mangou was even more direct in an earlier case. In January, he summoned Editor-in-Chief Emmanuel Koré and News Editor Bakary Nimaga of *Le Patriote* after the daily published a copy of a leaked memorandum from his office directing subordinates to target opposition demonstrators as enemies of the state. “The source who came

forward with the document thought such language was dangerous for national unity,” Nimaga told CPJ. Mangou threatened to raid *Le Patriote* and told the editors that he had “gone to war” against them. “It’s the last time I warn you,” the paper quoted him as saying.

For now, governments seem more intent on shielding their actions than addressing domestic and international demands for transparency. The irony is that secrecy is bound to fuel even more investigative reporting. In some parts of the region, a “democracy deficit” contributes to government intransigence, said Mukelani Dimba, an analyst with the South Africa-based Open Democracy Advice Centre. In countries without effective opposition parties, he said, a critical press “assumes the posture of the opposition, or at least it is perceived as such.”

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*The irony is that official secrecy fuels
investigative reporting.*

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Local investigative reporting often focuses on basic governance such as the delivery of public services and the use of public money. When the press uncovers malfeasance, it’s a sensitive issue for governments dependent on foreign aid and investments. Recent revelations of corruption in Senegal, for example, caused the country to slip into the bottom half of Transparency International’s annual Corruption Perception Index in just the past two years.

One of Senegal’s best-known journalists, Abdou Latif Coulibaly, editor of the private weekly *La Gazette*, was the target of two criminal prosecutions triggered by investigative stories. After the government detained a top telecommunications regulator in March on charges of siphoning funds from a licensing agreement, *La Gazette* published in May a series of stories alleging that additional officials profited from the US\$200 million deal. An official named in the story, presidential adviser Thierno Ousmane Sy, soon filed a criminal defamation complaint against *La Gazette*. Coulibaly and two colleagues were fined a total of 20 million CFA francs (US\$39,000), although they appealed.

Sy’s father, Justice Minister Cheikh Tidiane Sy, then brought additional criminal charges of “handling stolen administrative documents” against Coulibaly in connection with a 2007 story about corruption in the national lottery. Because similar charges against the journalist had already been dismissed in the lottery case, most observers saw the revived counts as

retaliation. That case was pending in late year.

Far from viewing press revelations as negative, international development officials say the publication of information about government performance fills critical gaps in official data reporting. Even when a nation suffers negative short-term consequences from a critical news story, they say, it benefits from being perceived as having a transparent society with a press that serves as a check on power.

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For international donors, press revelations fill important gaps.

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“In Uganda, the publication of the amount of money reaching primary schools led to an increase in this amount,” the World Bank’s chief economist for Africa, Shantayanan Devarajan, pointed out in an e-mail interview with CPJ. Anga Timilsina, coordinator of the U.N. Development Programme’s anti-corruption effort, said press scrutiny expedites the achievement of Millenium Development Goals, eight anti-poverty benchmarks that world leaders have committed to reaching by 2015. “The press definitely has a role to play in achieving the [goals] through a range of activities ... making the governments and donors responsive and accountable to their promises.”

In fact, journalists such as the award-winning Ghanaian reporter Anas Aremeyao Anas have recorded spectacular successes in naming and shaming the perpetrators of corruption, child abuse, and human trafficking. As the press pursues investigative stories, he said, it has an obligation to focus on the public good and to avoid a fixation on taking down political figures. “You catch the person hand in soup,” said Aremeyao, known for his undercover work. “But you give them an opportunity to explain because in the explanation, you find a solution, i.e., ‘I did so because the government is not paying us well.’”

Mohamed Keita is CPJ’s Africa advocacy coordinator.

Summaries in this chapter were written by Mohamed Keita, CPJ's Africa advocacy coordinator, and Tom Rhodes, CPJ's Nairobi-based East Africa consultant.

Angola

President José Eduardo dos Santos led one of the world's fastest-growing economies, but he faced criticism over social inequalities, corruption, and press freedom violations. Capitalizing on booming oil production and diamond mining, his government invested a reported US\$1 billion to host the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations in January. But the soccer tournament, which the government saw as an opportunity to enhance its international image, was marred when separatist guerrillas ambushed the Togolese national team, killing two people, including a journalist, and exposing the precarious security situation in the restive enclave of Cabinda. Dos Santos, in power since 1979, and his ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) sought to tamp down on independent reporting of the ambush. By mid-year, a corporate entity whose principals were not disclosed had purchased three of the country's leading independent newspapers and toned down their coverage.

Insecurity in Cabinda, a sliver of land separated from Angola by the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, made worldwide headlines on January 8 when gunmen attacked a convoy of vehicles carrying Togo's soccer team. Stanislas Ocloo, 35, a sportscaster with the Togolese national broadcaster TVT, and assistant coach Hamelet Abulo were killed. The Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda claimed responsibility for the attack, according to news reports. Writing on the CPJ Blog in June, award-winning Angolan journalist Rafael Marques de Morais said the government pressured Catholic-run Radio Eclésiá and state media not to use their reporters' firsthand accounts of the attack. Without that reporting, which would have shed light on possible security failures, authorities were able to shift and avoid responsibility, he said. "The censorship compounded with the dearth of knowledge among international media allowed the government to rewrite the narrative unchallenged. Authorities sought to garner international sympathy on antiterrorism grounds, then pass blame onto the Togolese team itself," Marques wrote. The team was unjustly blamed for not notifying authorities of its itinerary, an assertion that the facts on the ground could have debunked, he said.

Following the attack, the government arrested nine people, including local community leaders, and charged them with endangering national

security, according to news reports. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International called the charges politically motivated and accused the government of coercing confessions. António Bento Bembe, the government's secretary for human rights, denied the assertions. José Manuel Gimbi, a local correspondent for the U.S. government-funded Voice of America, reported receiving death threats in relation to his reporting on the attack and its aftermath. Gimbi was known for having extensive sources within both security forces and separatists.

With public attention devoted to the Cabinda shooting and the Africa Cup of Nations, the MPLA-controlled National Assembly approved a new constitution that strengthened the ruling party's grip on power. The document, approved in January and ratified by the Supreme Court, established a new political system in which the head of the party winning a parliamentary majority automatically becomes president, according to news reports. The opposition National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) boycotted the vote, saying the electoral plan undermined democracy. The constitution, which replaced a transition document, is the first since a 2002 peace agreement ended 27 years of civil war.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » Legislation criminalizes coverage that insults president, state institutions.
- » Three top papers purchased by mysterious corporation. Coverage grows timid.

2

Journalists killed in 2010, one a Togolese sports reporter killed in soccer team ambush.

A handful of independently owned news outlets, including Marques' website, *MakaAngola*, scrutinized public corruption, drawing rebukes from the government. When Marques issued a critical report in September that called the president's office "the epicenter of corruption," the MPLA dismissed the findings as a smear campaign sponsored by unnamed foreign interests to "tarnish everything the executive power does" ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled for 2012. Press scrutiny paralleled a U.S. Senate investigation, completed in February, which detailed how transfers of millions of dollars from Angolan officials to U.S. financial institutions did not meet monetary transfer regulations, according to news reports. Angola has steadily slid down Transparency International's Global Corruption Perception Index, an annual survey measuring corruption levels in 178 countries, dropping to 168th place in 2010.

A state security bill passed by parliament in November offered government officials a new shield against public scrutiny. The measure includes a provision barring “words, images, writings, or sound” that insult the president, the state, or official institutions, according to news reports. The legislation, which took effect in late year, imposes prison penalties of up to two years for violations.

In June, a new and previously unknown local company called Media Investments S.A. purchased in one swoop three leading independent newspapers, all of which had actively reported on government corruption. The company, which did not disclose its principals, acquired *Semanário Angolense*, *A Capital*, and a 40 percent stake of *Novo Jornal*, according to Reuters. The company did not comment on its ownership.

Veteran journalist Reginaldo Silva, an independent member of the MPLA-dominated media regulator, the National Council of Social Communication, told CPJ that nondisclosure of shareholder information violated government regulations. “The law says that when you buy a newspaper or a radio station, you must provide to the council the names of your shareholders, even if you have a front company or an anonymous enterprise. But the law is silent on sanctions, so we have no power to enforce it,” he said.

With its purchases, Media Investments S.A. became Angola’s third-largest media company, Reuters reported. Journalists speculated that the new ownership was allied with the ruling party, pointing to the publications’ newly timid coverage. They also pointed to an August episode in which an edition of *A Capital* never hit the newsstands; the company called it a “technical” problem, but local sources said management had objected to a story critical of a presidential speech on housing. The company did not comment on the speculation.

Semanário Angolense, founded in 2003, was the country’s largest circulation newspaper and one of its most critical, according to CPJ research. Editor Felisberto da Grãça Campos, who had been imprisoned in the past for his critical reporting, told CPJ that the newspaper had faced financial pressures because the government had begun withholding state advertising and pressuring private businesses not to advertise there. He noted that government advertising had returned to the paper since the sale.

Journalists were targeted in a series of attacks in September and October, all of which went unpunished. On September 5, gunmen killed Alberto Graves Chakussanga, 32, presenter of a weekly news and call-in program on Radio Despertar, a station aligned with the opposition UNITA party. He was found with a bullet in his back in his home in Luanda’s Viana district, with only a bottle of cooking gas reported missing. Chakussanga’s program

was conducted in Umbundu, the language of the Ovimbundu, Angola's largest ethnic group, according to local journalists. No arrests were reported by late year.

On September 22, gunmen fired on TV Zimbo reporter Norberto Abias Sateko as he was walking home in Luanda's Prenda township, according to local journalists. Sateko, who had reported critically on the demolition of houses in the southwestern province of Huíla, suffered a leg injury, according to local journalists. No arrests were made by late year. The next month, an unidentified assailant stabbed popular Radio Despertar commentator and satirist António Manuel Manuel Da Silva, known on the air as "Jójó," as he was walking home in Luanda. The journalist, who had received prior death threats, had criticized the president for not addressing corruption and criminality in a speech to parliament, according to local journalists. Da Silva survived his injuries, but no arrests had been made by late year.

Outside Luanda, independently owned outlets were rare and journalists operated at the mercy of local police and officials who often abused their authority to suppress critical coverage. In September, police in the southwestern province of Huíla prevented three Luanda-based independent journalists from taking photographs of the local government's controversial demolition of thousands of homes and the displacement of residents in the provincial capital, Lubango, according to local journalists and news reports. In a story in *O País*, reporter Eugénio Mateus described the scene: "The victims asked the photographers to take pictures of the destruction of their homes for the world to see their plight, while a plainclothed officer and one wearing a uniform and armed tightened their surveillance by following journalists step by step." In the process, officers damaged the camera of *O País* photojournalist Nuno Santos. Provincial officials said flooding had put the occupants at risk, but residents claimed they were uprooted without compensation or adequate relocation.

In e-mail exchanges with CPJ, international journalists described confusing and lengthy bureaucratic processes to obtain visas, accreditation, or permits for reporting. "The whole issue of accreditation, press cards, rules for journalists is a massive hurdle to working in Angola," said a foreign media correspondent, who, fearing reprisal, spoke on condition of anonymity. "Getting accreditation for events locally can also be very complicated and bureaucratic, and in some instances I think it is made difficult intentionally," the reporter added. Journalists pointed to particular problems getting access to sensitive regions such as Cabinda and the northeastern diamond-rich region of Lunda Norte. Even when the central government granted permission, journalists said, local police often stopped, harassed, and demanded bribes from journalists.

Cameroon

When four newspaper journalists jointly sent questions to a top presidential adviser in late 2009, they hoped to learn more about alleged misuse of state oil company funds. Instead, they set off virulent government reprisals beginning in February that left one editor dead, another alleging he was tortured in state custody, and two others imprisoned for nine months. The case, the worst press freedom abuse in Cameroon in at least a decade, highlighted the brutal intimidation meted out by powerful public figures against journalists scrutinizing their activities.

The case began when the journalists sent a series of questions to Laurent Esso, secretary-general of the presidency and chairman of the state-run oil company SNH, along with a copy of a document that had been leaked to them. Their questions centered on whether 1.3 billion CFA francs (US\$2.6 million) had been improperly paid to three SNH managers as “commissions” in the purchase of an offshore service ship, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. The accompanying document purported to be a June 2008 confidential memorandum signed by Esso that described the payments. (Esso has not publicly commented on the allegations, and did not respond to CPJ’s requests for a response.)

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Authorities unleash reprisals when journalists question oil company deal.
- » Nation mourns the death of pioneering journalist Pius Njawé.

KEY STATISTIC

4

Journalists jailed for leaked document. One dies in custody, a second alleges he was tortured.

The newspapers never got a chance to publish the story; ironically, details of the allegations emerged instead from coverage of the journalists’ arrests.

On February 5, intelligence agents arrested editors Germain Cyrille Ngota Ngota of the bimonthly *Cameroon Express*, Harrys Robert Mintya of the weekly *Le Devoir*, Serge Sabouang of the bimonthly *La Nation*, and reporter Simon Hervé Nko’o of the weekly *Bebela*. Agents with the Directorate-General of External Intelligence pressed the journalists for the source of the 2008 memo, holding them each for several days, they later told colleagues. By February 25, news reports said, judicial police charged

the journalists with falsifying a government document. Nko'o had gone into hiding by that time, but the others were rearrested and placed at Kondengui Prison in the capital, Yaoundé.

On April 22, while in pretrial detention, Ngota died in his cell. The 38-year-old died from “abandonment, improper care,” and the authorities’ “failure to render assistance,” according to a prison doctor’s initial death certificate, which his family shared with local journalists. A 15-year veteran of the press, Ngota was the first journalist to lose his life in the line of duty in Cameroon since CPJ began documenting media casualties in 1992.

CPJ and other groups immediately called for an independent investigation into the death. President Paul Biya did order a judicial police probe “independent of the executive,” but appeared to immediately predetermine its result. Biya asserted the case was “not a matter of restriction of freedom of the press,” according to news reports, and said that Ngota had died of poor health. The ensuing government inquiry was riddled with irregularities.

Just two days after Biya’s announcement, Communication Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary said Ngota had tested positive for HIV and died from its complications—a claim disputed by the journalist’s widow. Tchiroma said the findings were based on a second medical examination of Ngota’s body, which he said was held in the presence of the journalist’s family—a claim denied by Ngota’s brother, Bruno Ntede, according to Agence France-Presse. Félix Cyriaque Ebolé Bola, a local journalist invited by the government to be an independent witness at the examination, told CPJ that he was given the wrong address and didn’t make it to the exam.

In September, Justice Minister Amadou Ali presented the findings of his agency’s inquiry into the death, which absolved authorities of any responsibility. The National Union of Cameroonian Journalists and Ngota’s family criticized the investigation as opaque—relatives were never consulted or apprised of its progress—and inherently conflicted because the same judicial police conducting the probe were involved in the initial arrests of the four journalists. The report found no mistreatment.

But Nko'o, the fellow journalist who went into hiding, told CPJ that he was tortured during his brief time in prison. A doctor who examined Nko'o said in a signed statement on February 22 that he found bruises on the soles of the journalist’s feet. The statement, obtained by CPJ, also outlined Nko'o’s claims of being subjected to waterboarding, sleep deprivation, and exposure to cold as state agents tried to force him to reveal his sources for the memo.

Local and international groups, including CPJ, decried the lack of independence in the investigation, and said the government bore responsibility for the detainees in its custody.

On May 3, World Press Freedom Day, armed troops broke up a sit-in

protest being held in front of Prime Minister Philémon Yunji Yang's office in Yaoundé by hundreds of journalists demanding justice for Ngota and the release of the other jailed journalists, according to news reports. Biya finally ordered the release of Mintya and Sabouang in November, but the criminal charges against them were still pending. Mintya's condition suffered in prison: He was hospitalized in August after he was assaulted in his cell, according to news reports.

In a May report, the U.N. Committee Against Torture expressed concern for "the high number of journalists and human rights defenders in detention and allegations of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment." The committee also said it was deeply concerned by the number of pretrial detainees and "the deplorable living conditions" in detention centers. It cited overcrowding, inmate violence, lack of hygiene and adequate food, and the absence of suitable medical care.

One other journalist, Lewis Medjo of the now-defunct *La Détente Libre*, was imprisoned in ill health during the year. Medjo was finally freed in May after serving 20 months in New Bell Prison on charges of publishing "false news," according to local journalists and news reports. While in detention, the journalist suffered heart ailments and a severe ear infection, according to CPJ research. He was first detained in September 2008 in connection with a column speculating, incorrectly as it turned out, that Biya had fired the Supreme Court president, according to the same sources.

At least eight other journalists worked under pending criminal charges related to their reporting on public officials, CPJ research showed. The highest-profile case involved four leading journalists who appeared on a June 2008 television debate program to offer critical commentary on Operation Sparrowhawk, the government's controversial corruption investigation. Spectrum TV Editor-in-Chief Thierry Ngogang, reporter Anani Rabier Bindzi of Canal 2 International, and journalist union executives Alex Gustave Azebaze and Jean-Marc Soboth continued to face charges of "biased commentary" and "unauthorized disclosure of a confidential document." During the program, Bindzi had displayed a document he described as a deposition.

Soboth fled into exile in January after receiving death threats from people he believed were state agents. Operation Sparrowhawk, which was in its seventh year in 2010, has been widely criticized for being biased and politicized.

Cameroon, which has Central Africa's largest economy, was among the 35 worst nations worldwide on Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perception Index, which ranks nations on government integrity,

and was in the bottom 40 on the 2010 U.N. Human Development Index, which gauges such things as life expectancy, education, and standard of living. Biya, in power since 1982, was expected to stand for re-election in 2011 after pushing through the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement-dominated parliament in 2008 a constitutional amendment scrapping term limits. In March, amid opposition protests, the chamber passed a law transferring oversight of the polls from an independent electoral body to the government's Ministry of Territorial Administration, according to Reuters. In a report released in May, the International Crisis Group, an independent think tank, warned of the risk of political unrest due to a combination of persistent corruption, widespread poverty despite energy and mining wealth, and disenchantment with the pace of reforms.

Biya's administration has kept a tight rein on independent broadcasting through a combination of exorbitant fees and a de facto policy called "administrative tolerance," which allows stations to operate pending the payment of fees. The Ministry of Communication cracked down on critical reporting on at least five politically sensitive occasions since 2008 by suddenly invoking nonpayment of licensing fees to suspend broadcasters, according to CPJ research. As a result, a handful of independent broadcasters operated under significant self-censorship, according to local journalists.

More than 400 private newspapers were registered in Cameroon, according to government data, but with scant advertising the overwhelming majority struggled to publish regularly, according to local journalists. Print journalists often went unpaid for up to 10 months at a time, according to a September 2009 Union of Journalists Workers in Cameroon survey. The significant financial and political pressures left journalists vulnerable to bribes and unethical practices that undermined freedom of the press, according to CPJ research.

The press corps also mourned the death of an icon during the year. Pius Njawé, 53, founder of the leading independent daily *Le Messager* and a 1991 recipient of CPJ's International Press Freedom Award, died in a traffic accident in the U.S. state of Virginia on July 12. Njawé had launched the Jane & Justice Foundation for Human Development dedicated to improving traffic safety following the September 2002 death of his wife, Jane, in a car accident in Cameroon. Although the Biya administration had repeatedly jailed and harassed Njawé, it issued a public statement calling Njawé "one of the pioneers of the opinion press" in Cameroon. "He has contributed, in his manner, to the liveliness of the national political and media landscape," declared Communication Minister Tchiroma, who read the presidential statement on state television.

Democratic Republic of Congo

On the defensive over criticism of its human rights record and its handling of the conflict with rebels in eastern Congo, President Joseph Kabila's government censored news coverage and detained several journalists during the year.

Given the government's record of press harassment, local journalists and the Kinshasa-based press freedom group *Journaliste En Danger* (JED) expressed fears that the government would ratchet up repression in the year before presidential elections scheduled for November 2011. JED leaders themselves were summoned by security services three times in 2010 for unspecified reasons, although they declined to report in each instance, JED President Donat Mbaya said. The historic 2006 presidential and parliamentary vote, the first since the country's independence from Belgium in 1960, was marked by arrests, censorship, and attacks on the press, CPJ research showed. With leading opposition figures Jean-Pierre Bemba and Etienne Tshisekedi in exile, President Kabila appeared the favorite to win re-election in November 2011, the second polls since the end of the 1998-2003 war, which claimed an estimated 5 million lives. But divisions within Kabila's ruling coalition, the jailing and murders of critics, lingering poverty, an expiring mandate for international peacekeepers, and persistent conflict in the eastern provinces sowed political uncertainty.

The mysterious death in June of leading human rights activist Floribert Chebeya also stirred fears of worsening repression. Chebeya, head of *Voix des Sans Voix*, or Voice of the Voiceless, was found dead in his car, hands tied behind his back, shortly after he was summoned for a meeting with national police chief John Numbi. His last text message to his wife said the appointment had been cancelled.

Those concerns grew after the October death in a military camp of a man arrested for throwing rocks at Kabila's motorcade. Authorities claimed the man committed suicide, but relatives said he had been mistreated in custody. Kabila addressed criticism of his country's human rights record in October at a summit of Francophone government leaders from around the world. "The Congolese government is determined to ensure that any crime—whether it is against a journalist or against the population in Kinshasa, in the east, or in the whole country—does not remain unpunished," Agence France-Pressé quoted the president as saying.

Most press freedom abuses occurred in western Bas-Congo province, home of the capital, Kinshasa, and seat of the national government, according to CPJ research. Authorities detained several journalists in Bas-Congo on criminal defamation complaints filed by officials over

stories detailing alleged corruption and poor governance. In November, for example, a Kinshasa magistrate sentenced Achille Kadima Mulamba, publisher of *Africa News*, to eight months in prison on charges of defaming a development official in a story alleging embezzlement of public funds, according to local journalists. Mulamba was free on appeal, which was pending in late year.

The Congolese national intelligence agency (known by its French acronym ANR) continued to engage in long-standing anti-press practices, making arbitrary arrests and detaining journalists incommunicado. In September, Tumba Lumembu, a reporter for the newspaper *Tempête des Tropiques*, disappeared in ANR custody for two weeks before inquiries from the U.N. stabilization mission in Congo forced the agency to acknowledge his detention, according to JED. A public prosecutor eventually charged Lumembu with insulting the head of state in remarks the journalist allegedly made on the street, but colleagues saw the arrest as a reprisal for his political columns, which criticized the administration. Lumembu was released from Kinshasa's Penitentiary and Reeducation Centre in November, human rights lawyer Jean-Claude Katende told CPJ.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government arrests several journalists on defamation charges.
- » Journalists fear repression as 2011 presidential election approaches.

KEY STATISTIC

2

Weeks that reporter Tumba Lumembu was held incommunicado by intelligence agents.

In an October interview with CPJ, Communications Minister Lambert Mende Omalanga acknowledged that journalists had been detained unlawfully by local and military officials who exceeded their authority. The United Nations—which operated the world's largest peacekeeping force in the country—issued a report in October detailing hundreds of atrocities committed by Congolese security forces and armed groups as well as the military forces of eight other African states during a period of political crises, regional wars, and conflicts between 1993 and 2003. In 2010, brutal sexual violence and killings continued in the mineral-rich eastern provinces as marauding Rwandan Hutu insurgents and other armed militias terrorized civilians.

The national government used the pretext of safeguarding the morale of

troops fighting rebel groups in the east to suppress critical news coverage. In April, for instance, a Kinshasa public prosecutor ordered the imprisonment of Jullson Eninga, editor of the daily *Le Journal*, on treason charges stemming from his September 2009 decision to publish a statement from the Rwandan Hutu rebel group Democratic Front for the Liberation of Rwanda, or FDLR, according to local journalists and news reports. The FDLR statement had accused the government of involvement in the massacres of Rwandan Hutu refugees in North Kivu earlier that summer. A Kinshasa judge acquitted Eninga in September 2010 and ordered the journalist, who had been detained for five months, to be freed, according to local journalists.

After banning Radio France Internationale (RFI) from the airwaves for more than a year, the government allowed the station to resume FM broadcasting in October. The government had singled out reporter Ghislaine Dupont's critical coverage of the military, including reports saying that troops had gone unpaid, when it censored RFI in 2009. But the ban was unpopular among the public, which had relied on RFI as an independent source of news. JED collected more than 10,000 signatures on a petition seeking an end to the ban. In the months before its broadcasting resumed, RFI announced the opening of a bureau in Kinshasa and named senior reporter Bruno Minas as bureau chief. Communications Minister Omalanga told CPJ the government had lifted its ban unconditionally, but warned that "demoralizing our army, which is at the front line, must stop."

One journalist was slain in eastern Congo under unclear circumstances. Armed men in military uniforms shot freelance journalist Patient Chebeya in front of his home in the volatile North Kivu city of Beni. Chebeya, 35, had just returned from editing video footage of a customs official's visit to the city. His wife, a witness, told local reporters that the gunmen declared they had been sent to kill Chebeya.

The arrest, conviction, and sentencing of three soldiers in the Chebeya case—all within 12 days of the murder—raised concerns among local human rights defenders. The haste with which authorities acted "compromised a serious, thorough, and professional investigation," Gilbert Kam-bale, a Beni civil-society leader, told CPJ in April. The proceedings, which resulted in death sentences for two suspects and a five-year prison term for a third, did not shed light on a motive for the crime or on the circumstances, according to local journalists. It was also not clear whether the death sentences would be carried out. Chebeya's widow said the suspects did not match the appearance of the killers, an assertion that prompted JED to call for a retrial. Authorities have been criticized before—notably in the 2007 slaying of journalist Serge Maheshe—for rushing journalist murder cases to trial and trumping up charges against innocent defendants.

The Congolese private press was largely financed by powerful public figures, and journalists operated under intense political and financial pressure, according to CPJ research. “Today, the disquieting scourge undermining press freedom is corruption,” said Mbaya of JED, explaining that few journalists had professional qualifications or resources to conduct independent reporting. In the run-up to the 2006 elections, wealthy businesspeople vying for political office launched dozens of media outlets to support their campaigns, according to CPJ research.

Ethiopia

The ruling Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front, or EPRDF, imprisoned journalists, jammed foreign broadcasters, and blocked websites as it swept general elections in May. The government-controlled National Electoral Board declared the EPRDF-led coalition of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, in power since 1991, the winner in all but two of 547 contested parliamentary seats, prompting opposition allegations of voter intimidation and ballot-rigging, as well as U.S. and European Union criticism. Zenawi won another five-year term as his government dismissed criticism of the vote as a smear campaign. Opposition leader Birtukan Mideksa was kept in prison until October.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Editor Dawit Kebede honored with International Press Freedom Award.
- » Authorities jail critical journalists, jam VOA Amharic broadcasts.

KEY STATISTIC

7

Hours that two newspaper editors were interrogated as Zenawi gave speech on freedom of choice.

As Ethiopian leaders trumpeted their economic growth, the government increasingly asserted its adherence to the development model of China. “We do not follow the liberal democratic principles which the Western countries are pushing us to follow,” Deputy Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn told the U.S. government-funded broadcaster Voice of America. In September, at Columbia University’s World Leaders Forum in New York, Zenawi delivered a keynote address that portrayed a decline in Western economic models and criticized the West’s purported impositions

on Africa. In the speech, he described a new era in which Africans have the choice of alternative models of development. “The fact that Africans now have a choice is ... fundamentally liberating,” he said. During a question-and-answer session after the speech, CPJ’s Mohamed Keita challenged the prime minister to reconcile his description of choice with his administration’s repression of journalists. “Over the years, in bringing choice to Ethiopians, we have had to trample on a few toes,” Zenawi responded. “And those few toes have had difficulty accepting the status quo in Ethiopia.”

Illustrating the government’s willingness to trample on toes, police in Addis Ababa interrogated two editors of the weekly *Sendek* for seven hours shortly before Zenawi took the dais in New York. Police said they had summoned the editors over a license violation; local journalists said the license was up-to-date and the questioning was actually motivated by the paper’s publication of an interview with an opposition leader.

Facing such harassment, journalists rarely dared to challenge gaps between the nation’s successes and its shortcomings. Paradoxes included the government’s claims of economic growth, even as the U.N. 2010 Human Development Index ranked Ethiopia in the bottom dozen countries worldwide. The index measures quality-of-life issues such as life expectancy, education, and standard of living.

Ethiopia’s embattled independent press still felt the loss of the news-magazine *Addis Neger*, which closed in 2009 when its editors, harassed by the government, fled into exile. The editors continued to publish an online edition of *Addis Neger* from exile, but domestic readership was severely curtailed.

In its absence, the weekly *Awramba Times* stepped in as the sole political publication to regularly question government claims, local sources said. The *Awramba Times* is among a handful of politically oriented newspapers that the government authorized in the years since it shuttered the independent press in the tumultuous aftermath of the 2005 election.

The government sought to intimidate *Awramba Times* staffers in reprisal for their challenging coverage. In May, for instance, the newspaper published a column comparing opposition fervor in the 2010 vote to that during the hotly contested 2005 election, according to local journalists. Desta Tesfaw, head of the government-controlled media regulatory agency, summoned one of the paper’s top editors, Dawit Kebede, and accused the *Awramba Times* of “intentionally inciting and misguiding the public,” the journalist said. The threats led Editor-in-Chief Woubshet Taye to resign.

Kebede reported in June that the newspaper’s mail was being destroyed and tampered with at Teklay Posta Bet, the national postal headquarters. Post office manager Bezabih Asfaw told CPJ that he would investigate, but

denied any tampering. In July 2010, *Ethio Channel*, a private pro-government publication, ran columns accusing *Awramba Times* of “working in collaboration with Ginbot 7 to remove the government from power,” according to local journalists. The government has banned Ginbot 7, an opposition political movement, and labeled it a terrorist organization.

Kebede, who was imprisoned in the 2005 crackdown, was honored in November 2010 with CPJ’s International Press Freedom Award in recognition of his courage in the face of government intimidation.

The government continued to harass other journalists targeted in the 2005 crackdown. In March, a panel of three Supreme Court judges reinstated fines imposed on the dissolved Fasil, Serkalem, Sisay, and Zekarias publishing houses; their principals were individually acquitted of antistate crimes. The fines, which ranged from 15,000 birr (US\$1,100) to 120,000 birr (US\$8,800), were heavy by Ethiopian economic standards.

Authorities also escalated pressure on the U.S. government-funded broadcaster Voice of America (VOA), zeroing in on the station’s hour-long Amharic-language programs, which had been broadcast into Ethiopia since September 1982. In February, VOA reported that its listeners in Ethiopia heard only static. CPJ sources in Ethiopia confirmed the reports, noting that VOA’s broadcasts in the Afan Oromo and Tigrigna languages experienced no interference. The Ethiopian government initially denied involvement. “This is absolutely a sham,” spokesman Shimelis Kemal told CPJ. “The Ethiopian government does not support the policy of restricting foreign broadcasting services in the country. Such practices are prohibited in our constitution.” Other international stations broadcasting Amharic-language programming into Ethiopia, including the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle, also reported recurring interference, according to CPJ research.

During a March press conference, Zenawi left little doubt that the government was in favor of jamming foreign-based stations. Comparing VOA’s Amharic service to Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, the Rwandan station infamous for incitement during the 1994 genocide, Zenawi said VOA broadcasts were “destabilizing propaganda.” He declared he would officially authorize jamming of foreign stations once government technicians had full capability. Following Zenawi’s comments, spokesman Kemal charged that “VOA in the past has repeatedly broadcast programs and statements that tend to incite, foment hatred between different ethnic groups,” according to news reports. VOA denied any accusations of incitement or unprofessionalism. VOA journalists said Ethiopian officials have refused to respond to the service’s requests for comment or information for years.

The government’s animosity toward VOA may have played a role in

the expulsion of Heather Murdock, a contributor who covered the May elections and was arrested in June while reporting in the eastern region of Harar. Authorities accused Murdock of attempting to contact the Ogaden National Liberation Front, a separatist group battling government troops in the area. (Harar borders the restive Ogaden region, where independent journalists are denied access, according to CPJ research.) Murdock denied the accusations, telling CPJ she was working on a story about hyenas.

The shift in the government's tone, from denial of abuses to defiance of criticism, occurred as Human Rights Watch released a report concluding that authorities had created a climate of fear ahead of the May elections through a "coordinated and sustained attack" on political opponents and journalists. In January, for instance, security agents in the northern city of Mekelle arrested Jason McLure of Bloomberg News after he interviewed leaders of the local opposition party Aarena Tigray about allegations of government harassment, according to local journalists. McLure was held for five days.

With four journalists behind bars when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1, Ethiopia was the second-worst jailer of the press in the region. Only Eritrea, with 17 jailed journalists, had a worse record.

Officially, authorities claimed to have relented in their persecution of journalists. "The government has rectified many, many practices such as pretrial detention of journalists. Prosecutors are not encouraged to press charges against journalists," government spokesman Kemal told CPJ in August. Yet authorities in the northeastern region of Afar held editor Akram Ezedin of the private Islamic weekly *Al-Quds* in pretrial detention for two months on defamation charges stemming from stories critical of the region's Islamic Council. Ezedin, 17, was arrested on September 11, the day his father, Publisher Ezedin Mohamed, was set free after serving nine months in prison for a 2008 column criticizing Zenawi's description of Ethiopia as "orthodox Christian," according to local journalists.

Two journalists from the government-controlled Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency—editor Haileyesus Worku and reporter Abdulsemed Mohammed—were imprisoned in apparent reprisal for Worku's alleged attempts to copy sensitive footage of the 2005 post-election violence. A week after the arrests, government spokesman Bereket Simon told CPJ the journalists had been "caught 'red-handed,'" but he would not detail the accusations. The two journalists were eventually charged with copyright violation. A trial, which was being conducted behind closed doors, was ongoing in late year.

Mohammed, a 14-year veteran, was one of several senior journalists

demoted by the state broadcaster during a politicized civil service overhaul that replaced professional journalists with party cadres, journalists told CPJ. They believed the charges against Mohammed were politically motivated reprisals for his lack of membership in the ruling party.

As in past years, Ethiopian authorities refused to account for the whereabouts, health, or legal status of Eritrean state journalists Saleh Idris Gama and Tesfalidet Kidane Tesfazghi, who have been held incommunicado on unsubstantiated accusations of terrorism since late 2006.

Ethiopian authorities imposed considerable Internet censorship: Websites for VOA, CPJ, and the URL-shortening service bit.ly were among those inaccessible in the country, according to local Internet users. The government's monopoly on Internet service took a turn in March when it awarded France Telecom a three-year contract to manage the state-run Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation. Terms of the deal were not disclosed, according to local news reports.

Nigeria

Official secrecy surrounded the heart ailment that eventually claimed the life of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, sparking a debate over what constituted public information. Nigeria celebrated 50 years of nationhood, but its celebration was marred by a deadly bombing for which a Niger Delta militant group claimed responsibility. Amid a climate of ethnic and political violence, exacerbated by widespread impunity, at least two

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- ▶ Two journalists murdered, another assaulted in ethnic violence.
- ▶ Secrecy surrounds death of President Yar'Adua.

KEY STATISTIC

7 Journalists kidnapped in restive southern region. All are freed.

journalists were killed in direct relation to their work, while a third was slain under unclear circumstances. Another seven journalists and a media support worker were briefly kidnapped in two separate cases in the volatile oil-rich southern region.

The withdrawal from public view of the first-term president, Yar'Adua, after returning from hospitalization in Saudi Arabia in late 2009, fueled uncertainty about his ability to perform his constitutional duties. By February, the National Assembly designated Vice President Goodluck Jonathan as acting head of state, but the administration remained reluctant to disclose information about Yar'Adua's health.

In March, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, a local nongovernmental organization, filed a petition with the Federal High Court that sought to compel Yar'Adua's personal physician to disclose the president's medical condition. In its petition, the group argued that "given the public nature of his duties," the doctor was obligated to provide any information that would allow citizens "to decide whether [Yar'Adua] is capable of continuing to perform his public trust and constitutional responsibility as president." The complaint was pending in late year, although the president's death rendered the case largely moot. While journalists had also pursued information about Yar'Adua's condition, many said they were chilled by the president's 2008 defamation lawsuit against the newspaper *Leadership* concerning its reporting on his health.

On May 5, in the midst of much speculation, presidential spokesperson Segun Adeniyi announced Yar'Adua had died of heart disease at age 58. His successor, Jonathan, appeared to take a different public approach than Yar'Adua, who was known for being inaccessible to the press and keeping a low public profile. After assuming the presidency, Jonathan created a public account on the social networking site Facebook in June. "I have created a Facebook fan page to interact with Nigerians," his first post read. "Through this medium I want Nigerians to give me the privilege of relating with them without the trappings of office."

Jonathan, from southern Nigeria, soon announced on Facebook that he would seek election in his own right in January 2011. But he faced a challenge in late year from two northerners, former military ruler Ibrahim Babangida and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, as the ruling People's Democratic Party sought to balance constituencies in the mainly Muslim north and the mostly Christian south.

Social networking became a popular means for debating national issues and reporting events firsthand. Using Twitter, citizen reporters in the capital, Abuja, shared their accounts of car bomb explosions that ripped through an October military parade marking Nigeria's 50th anniversary of independence, killing a dozen people. Journalists made use of Twitter as well, both to disseminate and collect information. Associated Press Bureau Chief Jon Gambrell tweeted updates from the parade, which continued despite the bombing, while CNN editor Faith Karimi sought out witnesses through her account. The militant Movement for the Emancipation of the

Niger Delta claimed responsibility for the attack, testing the leadership of Jonathan, a native of the Niger Delta. Following the bombings, Jonathan used his Facebook page to express his belief in the innocence of the militants, who have demanded that profits from oil extraction be reinvested in the impoverished Niger Delta. He was roundly criticized by indignant commentators in both new and traditional media.

Nigerians at home and abroad increasingly went online for news and information, visiting social networking sites such as Nigerian Village Square and news sites such as the U.S.-based *Sahara Reporters*. Professional journalists told CPJ they often leaked sensitive information to *Sahara Reporters* that they could not publish in Nigeria.

Journalists worked amid unpredictable and deadly violence. Three journalists were murdered in two unrelated attacks on a single day, April 24.

Editor Nathan S. Dabak, 36, and reporter Sunday Gyang Bwede, 39, of *The Light Bearer*, a monthly newspaper of the Church of Christ in Nigeria, were casualties of decades-long conflict in Nigeria's troubled central belt, which straddles a north that is predominantly Hausa-Fulani and Muslim and a south that is overwhelmingly Yoruba and Igbo Christians. The two were driving through Jos, Plateau state, when they were intercepted and stabbed by Muslim youths reacting to the reported discovery of a Muslim murder victim, said Katdapba Gobum, a local official with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ). Dabak and Bwede had been on their way to interview national parliamentarian Bitrus Kaze about recent outbreaks of deadly violence between Muslims and Christians in the area, said Gyarta Pofi, editor-in-chief of the *Light Bearer*. No arrests were reported by late year.

The same day, two gunmen killed court reporter Edo Sule Ugbagwu of the private daily *The Nation* in his home in Lagos. Ugbagwu, 42, had not been working on any sensitive stories leading up to his death, his colleague, Lawal Ogienagbon, told CPJ. No arrests were made by late year, and CPJ was investigating to determine whether the killing was work-related.

Impunity in anti-press violence was a particular concern for journalists. CPJ research shows that convictions have been won in only one journalist murder case out of eight documented by the organization since it began collecting detailed death records in 1992. But that record of impunity extends back much further, to the unsolved 1986 assassination of leading newspaper editor Dele Giwa. The case still resonates deeply with both journalists and those who seek to silence them. In April, for instance, four journalists received a text message reading: "We will deal with you soon. Remember Dele Giwa, Bayo Ohu, and Edo Ugbagwu?" The recipients—Yusuf Alli of *The Nation*, Olusola Fabiyi of *The Punch*, Chuks Okocha

of *ThisDay*, and Gbenga Aruleba of Africa Independent Television—had covered the politically sensitive dismissal of the national electoral commission chairman.

In March, amid another round of ethnic clashes, an angry crowd of mourners attending a mass funeral in central Dogo Nahawa assaulted and nearly lynched state radio reporter Murtala Sani. “He was inches from losing his life. They wanted to kill him and throw his body in the mass grave with the others,” wrote *Wall Street Journal* reporter Will Connors, who was also covering the funeral. The service commemorated more than 40 Christians who were killed during attacks on four central Nigerian villages. The attacks were seen as reprisals for a January assault on Muslims. A local pastor demanded Sani hand over his identification card, then told nearby men that the reporter was an ethnic Hausa-Fulani, journalists told CPJ. One man struck Sani and enlisted the crowd to join the assault, but police fired in the air and dispersed the mob.

Journalists were vulnerable to rampant criminality, including at least two kidnappings in the southern region. On March 1, kidnappers in the southern city of Owerre seized three sports journalists who were returning from a soccer match, according to news reports. Commentator Bowie Attamah, cameraman Alexander Effiong, and sound engineer Nick Greyling of the South African satellite channel SuperSport were released after a few days. No injuries were reported; it was not clear whether a ransom was paid as the kidnappers had demanded. In July, gunmen ambushed a convoy carrying NUJ leaders near the southeastern city of Aba, according to news reports. The kidnappers demanded a ransom of 250 million naira (US\$1.7million) for NUJ Lagos state officials Wahab Oba and Sola Oyeyipo, journalists Adolphus Okonkwo of Voice of Nigeria and Sylvester Okereke of *Champion Newspapers*, and driver Azeez Yekini. They were released unhurt a week later, the union reported, but it was not clear what ransom may have been paid.

Nigerian journalists, who are threatened with imprisonment under a series of repressive laws dating from colonial and military rule, won an important ruling in February when a Federal High Court judge declared the government-dominated Nigerian Press Council unconstitutional. The council was empowered to monitor press activities, enforce registration of journalists, and impose penalties for noncompliance. Established by a 1992 decree during the military rule of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, the council’s constitutionality had been challenged in 1999 by a coalition of journalists, according to CPJ research. Authorities appealed the ruling.

The reliance of needy journalists on financial support from influential public figures—commonly referred to as “money bags”—undermined the independence of the press and accounted for low quality in news and

information. Some journalists openly drew salaries from both news outlets and politicians. Veteran journalist Lanre Idowu noted the conflict while commenting on the February gubernatorial elections in Anambra state. “Media access remains largely determined by the size of the candidates’ purse and not the richness of their ideas,” Idowu wrote in a column in the private daily *Next*. “There has not been any robust interrogation of the candidates’ positions on issues in a meaningful context to ensure that the agenda presented to the public is useful.”

Rwanda

Before a crowd of thousands in Kigali, just days before he was re-elected in August in a virtually uncontested race, President Paul Kagame declared that “those who give our country a bad image can take a rope and hang themselves,” the BBC reported. Kagame’s antagonism toward critics guided his administration’s approach to the press throughout the election year. The government shut the nation’s two leading independent weeklies in April, silenced several other news outlets in the weeks before the vote, and harassed critical editors in court. In the most startling development, the acting editor of the independent weekly *Umuwugizi*, Jean-Léonard Rugambage, was gunned down outside his Kigali home in what appeared to be a planned assassination. Police immediately labeled the killing a reprisal for the editor’s supposed involvement in the 1994 genocide, a conclusion that was greeted with deep skepticism from journalists.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government drives Kinyarwanda-language papers out of print before presidential vote.
- » Critical newspaper editor assassinated. Skepticism greets police investigation.

KEY STATISTIC

93

Percentage of vote taken by incumbent

Paul Kagame in presidential election. He faced no credible opposition.

Kagame, in power since 1994, took 93 percent of the vote in the August 9 election. Although the president could run on his record of economic success, his government left little to chance. Three opposition parties were effectively sidelined from the election, leaving Kagame with no credible

challengers. Opposition party leaders Victoire Ingabire of the United Democratic Forces and Bernard Ntaganda of PS-Imberakuri were arrested in mid-year on charges of “genocide ideology” and “divisionism” under vague laws ostensibly designed to restrict hate speech but often used to silence dissent. André Kagwa Rwisereka, a leader of the opposition Green Party, was found dead in southern Rwanda in July. The three candidates left in the running were broadly supportive of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front. Observers from the Commonwealth group of nations, which Rwanda had recently joined, expressed concern about the lack of “critical opposition voices.”

And so it was in the press. Beginning in early year, presidential allies and government agencies unleashed a barrage of legal and administrative attacks against critical news outlets. In February, a Kigali magistrate imposed prison sentences against three journalists for the weekly Kinyarwanda-language *Umuseso*—Deputy Editor Didas Gasana, reporter Richard Kayigamba, and exiled editor Charles Kabonero—on charges of privacy violation. The case stemmed from a story alleging that Cabinet Affairs Minister Protais Musoni and Kigali Mayor Aisa Kirabo Kacyira had engaged in a romantic relationship. (Both officials denied having such a relationship.) The journalists’ prison sentences were stayed pending appeal.

The next month, Kabonero and Gasana were prosecuted on criminal defamation in connection with a 2008 article about a prominent Rwandan businessman wanted in South Africa on fraud charges. Days after Tribert Rujugiro filed the defamation complaint back in 2008, the businessman was arrested at Heathrow Airport on a South African extradition warrant, according to news reports. “This ought to have stopped the libel case, but not in Rwanda,” wrote Peter Noorlander of the Media Legal Defence Initiative, a U.K.-based nonprofit, in a commentary for the British daily *The Guardian*. In apparent disregard of Rujugiro’s widely reported arrest, the Rwandan court convicted and fined Kabonero and Gasana for defaming the businessman. That verdict was also appealed. The criminal convictions, if upheld, could have lasting journalistic repercussions: Under Article 24 of the 2009 Rwandan Media Law, editors and publishers are barred from professional work if they have criminal records. “I believe the government was behind these cases against us, just to get us out of the profession,” Gasana told CPJ.

Kagame put his personal stamp on efforts to demonize critical news outlets. After a grenade attack killed two people and injured 30 others in Kigali in March, the president told a televised news conference that two exiled, former military leaders, Kayumba Nyamwasa and Patrick Karegeya, were behind the attack. He went on to say that journalists had met with Karegeya in South Africa prior to the attacks, leaving a not-so-

subtle implication of impropriety. “There are those [journalists] who found Karegeya in South Africa and spoke to him. There are even those who went there, but have not returned,” he said. Although no journalists were named, the comment was clearly directed at journalists for *Umuseso* and *Umuwugizi* who had interviewed Karegeya. Godwin Agaba, a contributor to *Umuwugizi* who had broken stories about Nyamwasa, fled Rwanda soon after the president’s televised remarks. Police sources warned Agaba that he was at risk, Amnesty International reported.

The government stepped up its repression the next month. In an address to parliament, Kagame warned that unnamed newspapers “that trade on rumors” would face undisclosed consequences, according to a BBC Kinyarwanda broadcast. Just hours later, the Media High Council announced on national radio and television that *Umuwugizi* and *Umuseso* would be barred from publication for six months on charges of insulting the head of state and provoking insubordination in the army. The council, which did not cite specific news articles for its decision, followed up with a civil lawsuit seeking an indefinite ban on the papers. That case was pending in late year.

“Almost 70 percent of Rwandans speak only Kinyarwanda, not English or French, and only 3 percent have Internet access, so without these tabloid newspapers they will have no independent news,” said Jean Bosco Gasasira, chief editor of the Kinyarwanda-language *Umuwugizi*. The suspensions, and fears of further reprisals, prompted Gasasira and *Umuseso* editor Gasana to flee the country in the spring. Gasana told CPJ that he was under “intense surveillance” at the time.

The dangers appeared to intensify in June. An assailant shot Jean-Léonard Rugambage, acting editor and senior reporter for *Umuwugizi*, as he drove through the gate of his home in Kigali on June 24, police spokesman Eric Kayiranga told CPJ. At the time, the journalist had been investigating an assassination attempt against the exiled military leader Nyamwasa in South Africa, according to local reports. Rugambage had reported to friends and colleagues that he was being followed and had received death threats from unidentified callers, local journalists told CPJ. On the day of his murder, *Umuwugizi* published a story alleging that Rwandan intelligence officials were linked to Nyamwasa’s shooting. “He had gotten more clues on the case and was ready to meet me in exile to provide more information,” Gasasira said.

Days after the killing, security forces rounded up two suspects and lodged murder charges. Speaking at a press conference, Internal Security Minister Moussa Fazil Harelimana said one of the suspects “admitted guilt. ... He told the police he committed the act to take revenge against

this journalist, who killed his brother in the 1994 Tutsi genocide,” Agence France-Presse reported. The suspects were convicted on homicide charges in November, but journalists expressed deep skepticism about the government’s case.

In 2007, a traditional “gacaca” court had cleared Rugambage of any involvement in the genocide, according to local journalists. Rugambage had been the target of official persecution over several years because of his critical coverage of the government, CPJ research showed. While working as a reporter for the now-defunct independent tabloid *Umuco*, Rugambage was imprisoned for 11 months in 2005-06 over a story alleging mismanagement and witness tampering in Rwanda’s traditional courts.

A third private weekly, *Umurabyo*, was silenced a month before the election when police arrested editor Agnès Uwimana and assistant editor Saidati Mukakibibi on charges of incitement to violence, genocide denial, and insulting the head of state. The Kinyarwanda-language weekly, which ceased publication after the arrests, had risen to prominence after the government banned *Umuseso* and *Umuwugizi*. Although given at times to tabloid sensibilities—it once superimposed a Nazi swastika on a photo of Kagame—the paper also devoted in-depth coverage to sensitive topics such as the murder of Rugambage, the activities of the two dissident military leaders exiled in South Africa, and allegations of lavish government spending on luxury jets, according to local journalists.

Only a handful of independent papers continued to publish in the weeks ahead of the election, according to local journalists. In July, the Media High Council moved suddenly to enforce the provisions of a 2009 media law. The council ordered all media outlets to register with the government within eight days in compliance with the restrictive media law. On July 21, the council ordered security forces to shut down newspapers and radio stations that it said failed to meet registration requirements. The list included the already-suspended *Umuseso* and *Umuwugizi*, along with Kinyarwanda-language newspapers *Umurabyo*, *Rushyashya*, and *Umuseke*, and the English-language papers *Rwanda Dispatch* and *Business Daily*, local journalists told CPJ. The 2009 media law requires local journalists to hold a university degree or certificate in journalism from a recognized institution, a requirement that few practicing Rwandan journalists could meet. The German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle was also suspended for not providing adequate documentation.

From afar, exiled Rwandan journalists tried to fill the vacuum in critical reporting. Gasasira continued to produce the *Umuwugizi* website with reporters working undercover in the country, he told CPJ. In June, exiled *Umuseso* journalists launched an independent English-language weekly, *Newsline*, and tried to ship the paper by bus into Rwanda. But police

detained the bus driver and conductor at the border and confiscated the copies, Gasana told CPJ. *Newsline* workers surreptitiously delivered subsequent issues across the border, but in far smaller numbers, Kabonero told CPJ.

Little seemed open for debate as voters went to the polls in August. State media slanted coverage toward Kagame, although most private outlets gave equal coverage to the four presidential candidates. It didn't matter much, journalists said. "Of course, the media can cover all of the candidates without losing favor with Kagame—none of them are genuine contenders," a local journalist told CPJ. He requested anonymity for fear of reprisal.

Somalia

Somalia remained Africa's most dangerous country for the press. Two journalists were killed during the year in direct relation to their work, bringing the death toll to 23 since 2005. The conflict between Islamic insurgent groups and a weak Transitional Federal Government backed by African Union troops continued to fuel a steady exodus of journalists seeking to escape deadly violence, severe censorship, and harassment. CPJ's 2010 analysis of exiled journalists, published in June, found that at least 16 journalists had fled the country in the prior 12 months, with 59 having gone into exile over the past decade. Remaining journalists practiced extreme self-censorship to survive.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Africa's most dangerous country for the press. Two journalists killed in 2010.
- » Al-Shabaab shuts down, seizes control of major radio stations.

KEY STATISTIC

59 Somali journalists in exile, the second largest press diaspora in the world. Ethiopians constitute the largest.

The central government controlled only a small patch of the capital, Mogadishu, a few miles in radius, while two hard-line Islamic groups, Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam, controlled the large majority of the country. The escalating violence in central and southern Somalia forced an estimated 200,000 Somalis to flee their homes in 2010, the U.N. High

Commissioner for Refugees reported.

Insurgent groups often considered professional journalists to be government supporters and, thus, enemy targets. The ongoing threat led reporters to flee the capital, with some resettling in Hargeisa, Somalia's second-largest city, and others leaving the country entirely to live in Kenya, Uganda, and Djibouti. "Most of the veteran professional journalists have fled," said Mustafa Haji Abdinur, an Agence France-Presse reporter and 2009 CPJ International Press Freedom Award recipient who, at age 29, was a dean of the local press corps. "That's one reason why I insist on staying here. Who will guide these young, inexperienced guys who are the only ones remaining?"

Highly sensitive to local radio coverage, hard-line militants were quick to seize journalists, censor news content, and close stations. Al-Shabaab ordered Radio Markabley in the southwestern town of Bardera off the air and detained the director and a reporter in March after the station aired a program highlighting the suffering of Somali citizens following the Kenyan government's closure of a border crossing, according to local reports. Al-Shabaab released Director Ahmed Omar Salihi the following day and reporter Mohamed Abdihakim three days later. Insurgents told Salihi that his reporters would be killed if they continued to cover political issues, local journalists told CPJ.

Several media houses in Mogadishu sought refuge by relocating to the slivers of government-controlled territory. "While the government will harass and detain you, the other side will kill you—that's the difference," Radio Shabelle correspondent Abdihakim Jimale told CPJ. Shabelle, one of the leading independent radio stations, stealthily moved its equipment, piece by piece, from Mogadishu's insurgent-controlled Bakara Market to a government-controlled area in June.

By late year, virtually all media in insurgent-controlled areas were forced to run propaganda or were shut down entirely. Al-Shabaab raided the studios of major independent broadcasters such as HornAfrik, Somaliweyn, and GBC in Mogadishu, and Radio Mandeeg in the southern town of Belet-Hawo, using the seized equipment for its own fledgling network of five stations, called Radio Al-Andalus. "They tied us up in our archive room and started looting the equipment," said Radio Mandeeg producer Hassan Mohamed Mohamud. "Then they burned down our archive library, which I managed, and ruined years of Somali history." During the holy Ramadan holiday, Al-Shabaab simply took over the major Mogadishu broadcaster Radio IQK, which had focused on Islamic issues.

Insurgents imposed severe censorship on all stations in rebel-held territories. Hizbul Islam and Al-Shabaab banned broadcasts of the World

Cup, BBC programming, and all music, including advertising jingles and theme music introducing programming. Fourteen private radio stations in the capital stopped airing music in April after a Hizbul Islam leader, Sheikh Ma'alin Hashi, issued an ultimatum. Several stations started to use sound effects in place of music previously used to introduce programs, local journalists told CPJ. "I decided to record gunshot sounds for our news bulletins," said one journalist, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "There are plenty of them to record around here and that's usually what's covered in the news anyways." In May, before Radio Shabelle moved to a government-controlled area, Al-Shabaab commanders demanded that the station never mention shells fired by its forces and that it refer to civilians killed as "martyrs."

Broadcasters Radio Shabelle, Tusmo, Voice of Democracy, Codka Nabadda, HCTV, Universal TV, the U.N.-backed Bar-Kulan Radio, as well as the state-run Radio Mogadishu, all operated within the government-controlled areas, Information Minister Abdirahman Omar Osman told CPJ. Nonetheless, Tusmo and Codka Nabadda upheld the insurgents' ban on music, while HCTV refrained from criticizing Al-Shabaab, the minister added.

Journalists found themselves caught between two sides at times. After the insurgents sought to ban music on the radio, the government threatened to close the stations that complied with the order. "We will not tolerate the radio stations that halted airing music and songs in the government-controlled area," Abdikafi Hilowle Osman, general secretary of the Banadir Regional Administration, told reporters at an April press conference. Two stations that complied with the music ban were taken off the air for six hours by security agents until the information minister at the time, Dahir Mohamud Gelle, intervened and reversed the order, the Somali Foreign Correspondents Association reported.

Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the fatal shooting of veteran Radio Mogadishu journalist Sheikh Nur Mohamed Abkey near his home in southern Mogadishu in May. Colleagues said he was targeted for his affiliation with the government-run station. Abkey, who was in his 60s, had been a trainer and mentor to generations of young journalists, colleagues said. Earlier in the year, Hizbul Islam leader Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys declared at a press conference that journalists working for Radio Mogadishu should be killed for supporting "the enemy," local journalists told CPJ.

Another veteran journalist, Barkhat Awale, 60, director of the community station Hurma Radio, was killed in crossfire in Mogadishu in August. Awale was on the roof of the station helping a technician fix a transmitter when he was struck in the abdomen by a bullet, local journalists

told CPJ. Awale's death came during intense fighting between Al-Shabaab insurgents and African Union troops. Earlier that day, at least 33 people were killed when two suicide bombers detonated explosives at the Muna Hotel, located near the presidential palace.

As the fighting intensified, the government harassed independent journalists covering the conflict. "You are not allowed to take pictures. If government soldiers are defeated in battle, they complain whether it is fact or not," AFP's Abdinur said. Police detained Abdinur and freelance cameraman Yusuf Jama in July for taking pictures of their colleague, Associated Press photojournalist Farah Abdi Warsame, who had been hit in crossfire in Mogadishu. The journalists were interrogated for several hours and forced to delete their photographs, Abdinur told CPJ. In June, *New York Times* correspondent Mohammed Ibrahim fled Somalia after receiving threats from government security forces over an article saying that the government had enlisted child soldiers. Ibrahim returned to Mogadishu in September after the government pledged that no harm would come to him.

African Union peacekeeping forces also obstructed local journalists. In November, AU troops at Aden-Adde International Airport prevented several photographers from taking pictures of a British couple who had been released by kidnappers, according to local reports.

Islamic rebel groups gradually infiltrated the semiautonomous region of Puntland, prompting authorities to crack down on the press under the guise of state security. Puntland Information Minister Abdihakim Ahmed Guled barred Nuh Muse, a correspondent for Universal TV and the U.S. government-funded Voice of America, from working in Puntland, local journalists told CPJ. No explanation was given, but colleagues said the government apparently believed Muse had arranged interviews with the Islamic militant leader Sheikh Mohamed Said Atom. Since 2005, Atom had led a protracted guerrilla war from a base in the mountainous village of Galgala, about 30 miles (45 kilometers) south of the port city Bossasso.

The private station Horseed FM also faced government reprisals for interviewing Atom in August, after his forces attacked Puntland troops in the Galgala region, Horseed Director Mahad Ahmed told CPJ. Armed police stormed the station in Bossasso the day of the interview, arresting Deputy Director Abdifatah Jama and seven other staff members, according to local journalists. The other staff members were released after a few hours, but Jama was convicted and sentenced to six years in prison the following day under a broad regional anti-terror law. Horseed appealed the court decision, noting that Jama had no access to a lawyer during the summary proceedings, Ahmed said. Provisions of the anti-terror law, passed by

the regional parliament in July, had not been publicly disseminated by late year, leaving the press unsure even of what constituted a violation, local journalists told CPJ. Following international pressure, Jama was freed on a presidential pardon in November.

Journalists faced several other threats from Puntland security forces and rebel groups throughout the year. CPJ documented nine cases of police and security personnel attacking journalists with impunity. In one case, security guards stationed at the High Court in Bossasso beat Radio Simba journalist Ahmed Ibrahim Noor, leaving him unconscious, local journalists reported. Noor suffered headaches and dizziness for days following the unexplained attack, the National Union of Somali Journalists reported.

In January, unidentified assailants threw hand grenades at three Galkayo-based radio stations: Radio Voice of Mudug, Radio Hoby, and Radio Galkayo. Burhan Ahmed Dahir, secretary general of the Media Association of Puntland, told CPJ that three journalists and one security guard were injured in the attacks. The perpetrators and the motive were unclear, Dahir said.

By comparison, the northern breakaway republic of Somaliland boasted a vibrant press. Papers such as the critical private weekly *Heegan* were able to provide thorough and balanced coverage of the region's presidential election. Regional officials staged a relatively peaceful and free election in which opposition leader Ahmed M. Mahamoud Silanyo defeated the incumbent, Dahir Riyale Kahin, for the presidency.

"Given the poor resources and training of the journalists here," BBC reporter Jamal Abdi told CPJ, "the local media did a remarkably good job covering the elections and polling across Somaliland's six polling regions." They did so despite some harassment. In early June, police detained several journalists for a day after they took pictures of presidential guards attacking people displaying an opposition party flag, local journalists told CPJ. Security agents arrested Hadis Mohamed, editor of a critical website *Baadiya*, and held him without charge for a three-day period that coincided with the voting, Mohamed told CPJ. He said he was targeted for giving equal coverage to the opposition.

The National Union of Somali Journalists petitioned the new government to allow private broadcasters to operate in Somaliland. Although Somaliland had a relatively free, independent print press, its radio and TV outlets were state-controlled. Many citizens relied on private radio stations that broadcast outside of the country, such as the Netherlands-based Horyaal Radio, local journalists told CPJ.

South Africa

On the defensive about high crime rates and reports of public corruption, the ruling African National Congress pushed back aggressively against a probing news media. As ANC leaders ratcheted up anti-press rhetoric, the government moved ahead with legislative proposals that would monitor and sanction the press, criminalize investigative journalism, and shield public officials from scrutiny. The ANC campaign tarnished the image of Africa's press freedom leader and raised fears that the country could backslide into apartheid-era censorship.

The ANC, in power since the end of apartheid in 1994, signaled its newly adversarial position toward the press in a July report titled "Media Transformation, Ownership and Diversity." The document claimed that "a number of people" had been "victims of unfairness" by news media and were unhappy with "unsatisfactory decisions" from self-regulatory institutions such as the press council and press ombudsman. The report went on to drop a bombshell, proposing the creation of a government-run media tribunal to hear and act on complaints against the press. In an August letter to President Jacob Zuma, CPJ noted that "government-sponsored media regulatory agencies across Africa have been used time and time again as instruments of political censorship."

In remarks to parliament in September, Zuma cast the proposed media tribunal as a defender of the average citizen. "It does not infringe on freedom of the press, but it deals with the human rights of all citizens," he said, asserting that news outlets were defaming defenseless citizens. "Here, they would have an institution to go to." But CPJ research shows that South African press scrutiny typically focused on government officials and ruling party actions concerning public expenditures, crime, and good governance. In February, for instance, the Johannesburg-based daily *The Star* published stories contrasting the affluent lifestyle of ANC youth leader Julius Malema with his public advocacy of communist policies.

Despite widespread opposition, the ANC issued a statement in September saying it would move forward with the creation of the tribunal. Members of parliament were considering details of the plan in late year, leaving unclear the specific powers of the proposed tribunal.

The administration introduced a separate proposal that would undermine in-depth reporting. The Protection of Information Bill, introduced to parliament in March by Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele, would effectively shield government officials from public scrutiny and criminalize activities essential to investigative journalism, according to CPJ's analysis. Under the bill, state agencies would have unchecked authority to classify

public data as secret based on vaguely defined “national interest” considerations, according to CPJ research and legal experts. National interests would include such broad categories as “details of criminal investigations.” The bill would place the burden on journalists to establish “public interest” to justify declassifying any information. Journalists and others found guilty of unauthorized disclosure of classified information could face up to 25 years in jail. Analysts said the legislation was more restrictive than a 2008 version that was itself seen as restrictive; the government withdrew that bill after encountering opposition.

The 2010 version came on the heels of several news reports that cited leaked government data showing wasteful spending and mismanagement, but Security Minister Cwele said, “We are not seeking to cover up corruption.” In remarks to parliament in October, Cwele said the information bill would shield the state from what he called political and economic espionage. He resisted pressure to amend the measure to allow independent oversight of document classification.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » ANC pushes proposal to create state media tribunal to monitor, sanction press.
- » Anti-media rhetoric heats up, tarnishing nation’s image as press freedom leader.

25

Years of imprisonment for disclosing classified information, as proposed in the Protection of Information Bill.

Writing on the CPJ Blog in August, freelance journalist Thulani Ndlovu noted recent press revelations that government agencies had spent public money on luxury cars, prolonged stays in five-star hotels, tickets to major sporting events, and self-congratulatory advertising. Under the proposed measure, he said, such reports “would be kept secret in the interest of ‘national security.’” ANC official Tokyo Sexwale said the proposals contradicted everything the party represented. “That the media should be fought, destroyed, that would be unconstitutional. That would be running against any value that [Nelson] Mandela stands for, that I stand for,” he wrote in the *Sunday Times* in August.

ANC legislators were considering other measures that would curtail the work of journalists, said Raymond Louw, a leader of the South African National Editors’ Forum. Among them was a proposal that would conflate reporters’ phone calls and visits to newsmakers with harassment.

South Africa invested heavily to host the 2010 World Cup and project to the world an image of a tolerant, multiracial, and modern democracy. The June-July tournament was the largest sporting tournament ever to take place on the continent. But while the government spent an estimated 40 billion rand (US\$5.8 billion) on stadiums and infrastructure, according to news reports, it faced domestic scrutiny over its performance on socio-economic problems, including criminality and income disparities that ranked among the world's greatest. The World Bank described South Africa as a nation with "extreme differences in incomes and wealth."

In January, the government put tremendous pressure on a pair of television journalists who aired an interview with two self-described Soweto thieves to gauge their reaction to new anti-crime measures being imposed for the World Cup. An eTV spokesman said the interview was intended to provide insight into the criminal underworld and how it viewed the government's crime-fighting efforts. The interview subjects, who were masked, said they would not be deterred by police efforts.

Police immediately demanded that eTV News Editor Ben Saidi and reporter Mpho Lakaje reveal the identities and addresses of the interview subjects; when the journalists refused, prosecutors in Johannesburg issued subpoenas under the 1977 Criminal Procedure Act, a law typically used to compel uncooperative witnesses in criminal cases. Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa accused the broadcaster of "protecting criminals at the expense of South Africans." As government pressure was building, the man who helped set up the interview, Lucky Phungula, was found dead in his home, the victim of a poisoning. Calling the death a suicide, police said Phungula left a note saying he feared being exposed.

The case against the journalists was eventually dropped pursuant to a 1999 memorandum of understanding between government agencies and the South African National Editors Forum, according to news reports. The memorandum calls for mediation in cases in which journalists are asked to testify in court.

Leaders of the ANC Youth League intimidated journalists writing critical stories about party activities. Isaac Mahlangu, a youth league official in Mpumalanga, sent a statement to the daily *City Press* threatening violence after the newspaper published stories alleging nepotism in the organization, according to news reports. "Our machine guns are ready," read the statement. In a subsequent interview with the African Eye News Service, Mahlangu declared that "the machine gun is hot and ready" for "campaigners who want to use the media to destroy ANC leaders."

In August, police officers seized *Sunday Times* reporter Mzilikazi wa Afrika as he was looking into reports of corruption involving ANC officials

in Mpumalanga province. Wa Afrika was detained on accusations of “fraud and defeating the ends of justice,” and his reporter notebooks were confiscated, according to news reports. He was released on bail after a day in custody. But Ronald Ozzy Lamola, another youth league official, kept up the hot rhetoric, calling for wa Afrika to be charged with “treason” for “peddling lies.”

The tone reflected increasing anti-press antagonism from the ANC Youth League and its leader, Malema, a brash 29-year-old known for stirring the frustrations of millions of poor, mostly black South Africans.

In April, Malema expressed unconditional support for the president of neighboring Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. Although South Africa’s ANC-led administrations have led mediation efforts throughout Zimbabwe’s political crisis, Malema castigated Zimbabwean opposition leaders in a press conference. He also expelled a journalist from the briefing. BBC reporter Jonah Fisher, one of several journalists attending the press conference at ANC headquarters in Johannesburg, was ordered to leave after challenging the ANC leader’s criticism of Zimbabwe’s opposition Movement for Democratic Change, according to news reports. Malema had lambasted the party for maintaining offices in the affluent Johannesburg suburb of Sandton. When Fisher pointed out that Malema was himself a Sandton resident, the ANC leader unleashed a series of insults, the mildest of which involved calling the journalist “a small boy.” Asked why he expelled Fisher, Malema told reporters: “When we speak, you behave like you are in an American press conference? It’s not America. It’s Africa.” In a statement, the ANC condemned Malema’s behavior as “aggressive and insulting,” according to news reports.

Uganda

Authorities harassed and obstructed journalists covering two stories that shook the nation: a fire that destroyed a historic Buganda kingdom site and twin terror bombings in the capital. The press won an important legal victory as the Constitutional Court struck down a criminal sedition statute that had been used to silence critical journalists. But journalists faced new threats as the president signed a sweeping surveillance measure that could chill news reporting, while the administration drafted legislation that could expand regulatory powers over newspapers. Ruling party officials and supporters assaulted journalists covering opposition candidates in local balloting, an ill omen as the country prepared for the 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections.

Tensions between the government and the traditional kingdom of the Baganda, the largest ethnic group in Uganda, flared in March after a fire of unknown origin destroyed the tombs of the traditional kings, an important historical and spiritual site on Kasubi Hill near the capital, Kampala. Riots ensued as Baganda protesters demanded a thorough investigation into the fire, according to local reports. At least three people died in the clashes. Five journalists were reported injured after being assaulted by either protesters or security forces, according to CPJ interviews. Moses Lemisa, who covered the protests for the pro-government vernacular daily *Bukedde*, said he suffered a hand injury and lost his camera after security agents and then protesters assaulted him. President Yoweri Museveni ordered security agencies to monitor news coverage for any speculation on the government having a hand in the fire. "I have instructed the security forces to scan all tapes, radios, and media because this [rumor] is incredible," he said at a press conference at the State House in Entebbe. No harassment was reported as a result.

The clashes were the second in two years between the government and the Baganda. Several journalists were attacked during riots that broke out in 2009 when the traditional king, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi, was blocked from attending a rally in northern Uganda. The government reacted to the 2009 riots by closing four radio stations, including the prominent Central Broadcasting Service (CBS), owned by the Buganda kingdom. The Broadcasting Council, a government regulatory agency, said broadly that the stations were inciting violence but never identified specific objectionable content. The other stations resumed broadcasting in the ensuing months, but CBS remained closed until October 2010. A court case filed by CBS, pending in late year, claimed the government acted illegally and demanded compensation. A government counterclaim, which blamed CBS for loss of life during the riots, was dismissed by Uganda's High Court. The Museveni administration has allowed traditional kingdoms to exercise some authority on cultural issues, but relations with the Baganda have grown tense in recent years as kingdom leaders have employed a stronger political voice.

Bomb blasts rocked a club and a restaurant in Kampala in July, killing more than 70 people who had gathered to watch the World Cup final. Stephen Tinkamanyire, a part-time presenter for radio station Vision Voice, was among the victims. Al-Shabaab, a hard-line Islamic group based in Somalia, claimed responsibility for the attacks, an apparent reprisal for Uganda's military support of the central government in Mogadishu. Somalis residing in Uganda felt an immediate backlash. At least 20 were arrested in the aftermath, according to the Ugandan daily *New Vision*. Bille Abdullahi, a former reporter for the independent Somali broadcaster, Radio Shabelle, was arrested by anti-terrorism forces in July and held in Luzira Prison in Kampala until mid-September, according to exiled Somali

journalists. Abdullahi was not charged.

Authorities sought to restrict reporting on the police investigation into the bombings. An August injunction issued by a Nakawa chief magistrate's court prohibited news media from publishing any information about the investigations. The injunction was largely ignored by the media, said Barbara Kaija, chief editor of *New Vision*. Police accused Timothy Kalyegira, editor of the online *Uganda Record*, of sedition after he published a commentary speculating that the Ugandan government was involved in the bomb attacks. Police detained Kalyegira for several hours, took his laptop, cell phone, and passport, and demanded the passwords to his e-mail accounts, the journalist told CPJ.

Just days after the bombing, parliament adopted the Interception of Communications Act, allowing security agents to tap phone conversations and monitor e-mails whenever they suspect a potential security breach. "The law effectively turns Uganda into one Big Brother House," columnist

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN UGANDA

KEY STATISTIC

- » Electronic surveillance measure enacted; may chill news reporting.
- » Court strikes down sedition law used against critical journalists.

5

Journalists assaulted during clashes between security forces and members of the Buganda kingdom.

Isaac Mufumba wrote in *The Independent*, a private bimonthly. "Big Brother will listen in on your conversations with your wife, friend, or colleague and read text messages and e-mails to and from your spouse and friends." The measure, which the president quickly signed, would require cell-phone users to register SIM cards and would create a government center to monitor mobile use.

The press won a major legal victory in August when Uganda's Constitutional Court declared the criminal sedition statute to be unconstitutional. The court ruled on a petition filed by the East African Media Institute and Andrew Mwenda, a 2008 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee who had been targeted with 17 counts of sedition over the years. The panel of five judges, led by Deputy Chief Justice Leticia Mukasa Kikonyogo, unanimously ruled that the sedition law contravened Article 29 of the Ugandan Constitution, which guarantees the right to free speech, Mwenda's lawyer, James Nangwala, told CPJ. The government planned to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court, the highest court in Uganda. If upheld, the ruling

would lift a legal cloud over more than a dozen other journalists who had been charged with sedition in recent years (including, most recently, the *Uganda Record's* Kalyegira). Prosecution of sedition cases has been stayed while the constitutional challenge is pending.

Mwenda, founder of *The Independent*, did not persuade the Constitutional Court to strike down the charge of “promoting sectarianism” under Uganda’s penal code. Facing eight counts of “promoting sectarianism,” the journalist planned to appeal. His lawyer, Nangwala, said the statute’s language is so vague that it can be used to silence critical reporting. “If a reporter writes about a marginalized ethnic group, for instance, that can be considered promoting sectarianism,” he said.

Journalists faced a new legal battle in March, when the government outlined plans to amend the 1995 Ugandan Press and Journalist Act. As initially proposed, the amendment would require newspapers to obtain licenses annually from a regulatory agency known as the Media Council. Under the plan, the council could deny licenses to media houses based on such vague criteria as the “social, cultural, and economic values of the newspaper” and the “proof of existence of adequate technical facilities.” The measure would also impose fines and suspensions against media houses that “publish material prejudicial to national security, stability, and unity” and material “tantamount to economic sabotage.” On World Press Freedom Day in May, scores of journalists marched in Kampala to denounce the proposal, according to local reports. Information Minister Kabakumba Masiko told CPJ in September that the government was willing to compromise on the proposed language and said it would consult media representatives before presenting a formal bill to parliament. The measure’s vague clause on “economic sabotage” could further impede reporting on recently discovered oil reserves in the western part of the country. Independent journalists reported ongoing difficulty in obtaining documents and information related to oil exploration.

As the 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections crept closer, journalists covering opposition candidates were targeted by operatives for the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM). The Kalangala Action Plan—a militia that journalists said had links to the government—abducted and assaulted editor Moses Kasibante during midterm parliamentary voting in Mukono North in May, the journalist told CPJ. Kasibante, an editor for *Ggwanga*, a Luganda-language weekly, was considered a supporter of the opposition party candidate. Kasibante said militia members abducted him at a polling station and took him to a house in Mukona where they interrogated and beat him for two hours. CPJ documented seven other cases in which NRM officials or supporters assaulted journalists covering opposition party activities.

One journalist was slain in direct connection to his work. In September, motorcycle taxi drivers beat freelance journalist Paul Kiggundu to death, local journalists told CPJ. Kiggundu was attacked while he was filming some drivers demolishing a house in a town outside of Kalisizo in south-west Uganda. The home belonged to another driver who was accused of committing murder and robbery. Five suspects had been arrested in late year.

Zimbabwe

Regulators granted five private publishing licenses, the first in seven years, opening a window for press freedom in this long-oppressed nation. But police harassment, regulatory intransigence concerning private broadcast licenses, and the government's unwillingness to pursue legal reforms ensured that the opening remained but a crack.

Infighting continued to undermine the coalition government of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). President Robert Mugabe vowed to call presidential and parliamentary elections in mid-2011 to "bring an end" to the troubled coalition with the MDC, he announced

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Press makes incremental gains as five private publication licenses are granted.
- » Police, ZANU-PF loyalists harass, assault independent journalists.

KEY STATISTIC

0

Broadcast licenses issued to private outlets since 2001.

on state radio in November. He vowed to press ahead with the elections even if constitutional reforms are not completed as required by the power-sharing agreement signed by the two parties in September 2008. The parties had tentatively agreed to call a referendum in 2011 on a constitutional overhaul, with elections to come later. Mugabe's announcement set the two parties on a potential collision course just two years after the disputed 2008 presidential election led the ZANU-PF to wage a campaign of violence, harassment, and imprisonment against opposition supporters and the press.

The press made incremental gains during the year. The Zimbabwe Media Commission, the new print regulator, established in February, granted licenses in May to five publications, including the independent *Daily News*, which the government arbitrarily shuttered in 2003 over the objections of the courts. The commission also issued licenses in May to the publishers of a new independent daily, *NewsDay*; to the ZANU-PF for a new party publication; to the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions for a union monthly; and to the publishers of the existing *Financial Gazette* for a new version, *The Daily Gazette*.

“We view this as a first step to media freedom,” said Trevor Ncube, publisher of *NewsDay*, which hit Harare newsstands amid great fanfare in June. “So even though it is a piecemeal achievement, it is still welcomed.” Ncube’s company also publishes two independent Zimbabwean weeklies and a South African weekly. The other new licensees, facing financial hurdles, had yet to publish by late year.

The Zimbabwe Media Commission, created as part of the power-sharing agreement, succeeded the notorious Media and Information Commission, which had overseen the closing of several private print publications in the early 2000s. The new commission includes private media representatives, offering hope of greater independence.

Issuance of the new licenses could ease the tightly controlled media landscape that had for several years included just a small handful of independent weeklies and no private broadcasters. But the same draconian laws long used to censor and control private publications remained on the books, most notably the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, which criminalizes the publication of information deemed prejudicial to the state or insulting to the president. Prison penalties run as high as 20 years.

New legislation being considered by parliament in late year would obstruct publication of government documents. The bill, an amendment to the country’s copyright laws, would allow the government to decide whether and how such fundamental documents as statutes and court rulings can be republished, according to news reports. “You can see its uses,” said one local journalist who spoke to CPJ on condition of anonymity. “If electoral laws are introduced for next year’s polls, we will not be able to publish them no matter how unpalatable.”

While harassment of journalists decreased since the dark days of the disputed 2008 presidential election, independent journalists were still targeted by police and ZANU-PF loyalists. Emblematic of the issue was freelance photojournalist Andrison Manyere, who was detained at least three times by police during the year. In January, police in the capital,

Harare, detained him for six hours after he covered a women's rights march; he was released without charge. In March, police detained Manyere for taking pictures outside Harare Magistrate's Court of two men accused in an anti-government plot. He was released from police custody the next day after paying a fine on a disorderly conduct charge, the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights reported. And in October, police detained Manyere and freelance journalist Nkosana Dhlamini overnight after they tried to cover a meeting about possible constitutional changes, Manyere told CPJ. ZANU-PF youth supporters confronted Dhlamini, believing he was reporting for a U.S. news outlet, and Manyere started to film the altercation. "Police arrived only to take my camera and handcuff me with my fellow journalist," Manyere told CPJ.

Journalists who contribute to media based outside the country, including both international and exile-run outlets, faced particular obstruction and harassment.

Stanley Kwenda, a contributor to the exile-run weekly *The Zimbabwean*, said he fled the country in January after receiving a threatening call from a person identifying himself as Chrispen Makedenge, chief superintendent of police. The caller said that Kwenda "would not survive the weekend." *Zimbabwean* editor Wilf Mbanga told CPJ that Kwenda had written a recent story about the 2009 death of Makedenge's wife. Makedenge did not return messages from CPJ seeking comment.

At least 49 Zimbabwean journalists were in exile when CPJ conducted its worldwide survey in June 2010, making it the fourth largest press diaspora in the world. (Only Ethiopia, Somalia, and Iraq have higher numbers of journalists in exile.) Many exiled Zimbabweans have continued to report on their country's affairs from exile. *The Zimbabwean*, which is edited in London and South Africa and distributed in Zimbabwe, is one of several such outlets. In November, Zimbabwean police issued an arrest warrant for Mbanga in connection with a 2008 story asserting that senior officials had plotted the murder of an election official. Police said it contained information "prejudicial to the state." Mbanga said that though *The Zimbabwean* had covered the murder, it did not publish the story described by police. While the London-based Mbanga would not face immediate arrest, the warrant would be an impediment to his return to Zimbabwe.

Distributors of *The Zimbabwean* were targeted as well. In February, soon after the paper published a front-page story describing infighting in the ZANU-PF, police detained two representatives of the paper's distribution company for three hours and briefly charged them under the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, local journalists reported. Police eventually dropped the charges.

Authorities also tried to obstruct the exile-run, U.K.-based SW Radio. For two days in September, SW Radio shortwave broadcasts of its news program “Newsreel” were jammed, listeners told the station. Information and Communications Technology Minister Nelson Chamisa said he was unaware of any government jamming, SW Radio reported, although the government has broadly acknowledged jamming in the past.

The government did ease the exorbitant registration fees imposed on foreign correspondents and local journalists working for foreign media. In May, authorities lowered fees for foreign correspondents from US\$10,000 to \$2,500, and fees for local journalists from US\$4,000 to \$120.

While the Broadcasting Services Act allows regulators to issue licenses to private broadcasters, none have been approved since the law’s enactment in 2001. “For five years now, Radio Dialogue has been meeting with the government on the issue of community radio licensing,” Peter Khumalo, chairman of the aspiring community station Radio Dialogue, wrote in a public letter to the government at the beginning of the year. “There has been a lot of talk, but no progress whatsoever in implementing the [power-sharing agreement] as far as broadcasting is concerned. We are losing confidence in the inclusive government’s desire, or ability, to complete the liberation of our nation by freeing the airwaves.”

The government’s broadcast regulator, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe, was headed by Tafataona Mahoso, a ZANU-PF loyalist. Mahoso was the head of the former Media and Information Council and spearheaded the 2004 closure of the private weeklies *The Tribune* and sister paper *The Weekend Tribune*. The broadcast authority did approve a license for the state-run Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation to launch a second television station, Channel 2, in May, the pro-government daily *The Herald* reported.

Attacks and developments throughout the region

Botswana

- » In August, a group of 32 media and civil-society members filed a petition with the country's High Court challenging the constitutionality of the 2008 Media Practitioners Act. Among other things, the law required the registration and accreditation of journalists, and established a government-controlled press council to monitor and sanction the press, according to the Media Institute of Southern Africa and news reports. The court challenge was pending in late year.

Burundi

- » Authorities detained Jean-Claude Kavumbagu, editor of the online news outlet *Net Press*, in July on treason charges in connection with commentary critical of the country's security forces, according to his lawyer and local journalists. The charge stemmed from a July 12 story in which Kavumbagu questioned the ability of Burundian security forces to prevent terror bombings similar to those that struck Uganda earlier that month. Defense lawyer Gabriel Sinarinzi told CPJ that the journalist was being held in pretrial detention at Mpimba Prison in Bujumbura. The charge, which was pending in late year, could bring life imprisonment.

Chad

- » In August, parliament passed legislation decriminalizing defamation, but introducing prison sentences for journalists and suspensions of media outlets found guilty of "inciting racial or ethnic hatred" or justifying violence, according to news reports. The legislation provided only vague definitions of incitement. Penalties include prison terms up to six months and fines up to 1 million CFA francs (US\$2,000).

Equatorial Guinea

- » Authorities in Bata ordered the arrest of Pedro Luís Esono Edu Biding, a reporter for state Radio Bata, in February after he broadcast a news item on the discovery of several bodies in a city landfill, according to local journalists and news reports. The journalist was released without charge after three days in police custody.

- » CPJ and dozens of organizations and prominent individuals called on UNESCO to reject a US\$3 million donation from President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo that would have created an international prize in life sciences. CPJ and others, pointing to the nation's long record of press repression and human rights violations, said the prize would be an affront to UNESCO and its principles. In October, UNESCO's executive board indefinitely suspended action on the prize. With the United States and several European countries saying they would never agree to go forward with the prize, the plan appeared to be virtually dead.

Gabon

- » In June, a criminal court sentenced Jonas Moulenda, a reporter for the state-owned daily *L'Union*, to a three-month prison term and a fine of 500,000 CFA francs (US\$1,000) on charges of criminal defamation. The conviction was based on an article raising questions about the unsolved November 2009 murder of a government official, defense lawyer Lubin Ntoutoume told CPJ. Moulenda, who reported receiving numerous death threats, was free in late year pending an appeal.

Gambia

- » In a February submission to the U.N. Human Rights Council, the Gambian government denied having any knowledge about the whereabouts or condition of detained journalist "Chief" Ebrima Manneh. Witnesses have told CPJ and a regional human rights court that security agents arrested Manneh in the newsroom of the *Daily Observer* in 2007 in connection with his plans to run a critical news story. The journalist was seen a handful of times since then in state custody, witnesses said, but the government has refused to disclose his location, legal status, or health. "The government has investigated his whereabouts, but to no avail," Gambian officials said in a report submitted to the Human Rights Council as part of its periodic review. In March, four U.S. senators urged Commonwealth of Nations Secretary-General Kamallesh Sharma to launch an investigation into Manneh's disappearance.
- » Abdoulie John, a correspondent for the U.K.-based website *Jollof News*, said he received telephone death threats in May after writing a critical story about remarks given by Justice Minister Edward Gomez. In comments made to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Gomez denied that Gambian officials had committed

human rights violations and blamed the country's poor reputation on "sensational and fabricated" reporting, according to local journalists and news reports. John's story noted that the remarks were greeted with skepticism.

- » In September, pro-government media reported that President Yahya Jammeh had received two awards and a letter of congratulations from U.S. President Barack Obama. White House officials told CPJ the claim was untrue. Jammeh had also claimed two other awards, one from a German group whose existence CPJ could not verify. The other, an honorary, tongue-in-cheek "admiralship" bestowed by the U.S. state of Nebraska, was withdrawn by the governor following CPJ's inquiries. The pro-government media's credulous reporting on the purported awards reflected a pervasive climate of repression, CPJ's Washington Representative Frank Smyth wrote on the CPJ Blog.

Ghana

- » Police charged Ato Kwamena Dadzie, acting editor of the Accra-based station Joy FM, with airing news "with intent to cause fear and alarm." Charges were brought in July after the journalist refused to reveal his sources for a story detailing death threats made against members of the Ghana Real Estate Developers Association who had opposed a government housing deal, defense lawyer Shadrach Arhin told CPJ. Dadzie was free pending a decision by the attorney general on whether to proceed with the case.

Guinea

- » In June, the military-led Transitional National Council enacted legislation establishing a new media regulatory agency and requiring all news websites to register with the government. The legislation continued to treat defamation as a criminal offense but replaced prison penalties with fines.

Guinea-Bissau

- » In May, assailants destroyed the Bissau offices of the private weekly *Diário de Bissau* and threatened owner and veteran publisher João de Barros over the paper's investigative coverage of drug trafficking in the country, according to news reports. No injuries or arrests were reported.

Ivory Coast

- » With presidential election results in dispute in December, the National Council of Audiovisual Communication ordered the satellite transmission company Canal+ Cote d'Ivoire to stop carrying international news channels, according to news reports. The ban, which affected about 10 French-language channels, came shortly after several stations aired a press conference at which the electoral commission declared challenger Alassane Ouattara the winner over incumbent Laurent Gbagbo. The results were immediately invalidated by the Constitutional Court, which said the tally had been announced after a legal deadline had passed. The court instead declared Gbagbo the winner.
- » In February, government regulators suspended the satellite feeds of broadcaster France24 after the station reported on an antigovernment demonstration in the southwestern city of Gagnoa, according to news reports and local journalists. Several people died after security forces opened fire on protesters, news reports said. The suspension was lifted after 11 days.
- » In August, a criminal court judge sentenced reporter Traoré Médandjé of the daily *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan* to one year in prison and a fine of 5 million CFA francs (US\$10,000) on charges of defamation and extortion over a story alleging corruption by a former health official. Médandjé was free in late year pending appeal.

Kenya

- » Joel Eshikumo, a journalist for the private *Weekly Citizen* newspaper, was released after serving eight months in a prison in the western town of Bungoma. He was convicted of criminal defamation in September 2009 over a story accusing Kenya's ambassador to Canada, Simon Nabukwesi, of misappropriating funds in his former position as a school principal, local journalists told CPJ.

Namibia

- » Four assailants, including three supporters of the ruling SWAPO political party, attacked freelance journalist John Grobler in January, cutting his face with broken glass, according to local journalists. One of the assailants accused the journalist of writing negative pieces about SWAPO, according to a police report. No arrests were reported.

Niger

- » In June, the transitional military government enacted legislation decriminalizing libel and other press offenses and setting up a new media regulatory agency, according to local journalists. Passage of the legislation followed the reopening of the national Press House, a press support center funded by the state, after its closure in 2008 by the administration of deposed leader Mamadou Tandja, according to news reports.

Republic of Congo

- » The media regulatory agency, the High Council on Freedom of Communication, issued a series of censorship orders in May, according to news reports and local journalists. On May 7, the agency suspended the weekly *Le Choc* for three months in connection with stories critical of France. Five days later, it suspended the weekly *Le Trottoir* for two months over a story implicating an official in a corruption scandal. And in late May, the agency slapped a two-month suspension on the human rights broadcaster, Forum TV and Radio, over a commentary critical of the government.

Senegal

- » In June, plainclothes police raided the printing house of the private daily *Le Populaire*, news reports said. Agents seized printing plates and copies of an edition that carried a petition demanding an investigation into missing licensing fees paid to the government by a private telecommunications company, according to the Media Foundation for West Africa.

Swaziland

- » The brother of King Mswati III threatened journalists in public comments made during a July national policy forum, according to local journalists and news reports. The independent *Times of Swaziland* quoted Prince Mahlaba as saying: “I want to warn the media to bury things that have the potential of undermining the country rather than publish all and everything even when such reports are harmful to the country’s international image. Journalists who continue to write bad things about the country will die.” The prince was a member of an influential royal council advising the king on public policy, including media issues, according to local journalists. The king did not address the prince’s statements.

- » In January, Attorney General Majahenkhaba Dlamini ordered the independent *Times of Swaziland* to stop publishing a weekly opinion column by Mario Masuku, leader of the banned opposition group, People's United Democratic Movement, according to the Media Institute of Southern Africa. The government has labeled the movement a terrorist group. The paper complied with the order.
- » In an October address to parliament, Prime Minister Barnabas Sibusiso Dlamini accused columnists of tarnishing the country's image and taking payments from unnamed foreign interests, according to the Media Institute of Southern Africa. The prime minister said he would pursue legislation requiring newspaper columnists to seek government permission before they write critically about the country.

Tanzania

- » Information Minister George Mkuchika suspended the independent Swahili weekly *Kulikoni* for 90 days under the 1976 Newspaper Act, presidential spokesman Salva Rweyemamu told CPJ. The January ruling stemmed from a November 2009 story that detailed alleged cheating in national exams for the Tanzania Peoples' Defense Force, Managing Editor Evarist Mwitumba told CPJ.

Togo

- » Freelance photojournalist Tony Sodji suffered burn marks and lacerations to his arms and hands while covering opposition protests in September and October, according to local journalists and news reports. The injuries were caused by tear gas canisters thrown by plainclothes security agents dispersing demonstrations by members of the opposition Republican Front for Change.

Zambia

- » In June, a magistrate sentenced Fred M'membe, editor-in-chief of *The Post*, Zambia's largest newspaper, to a prison term of four months at hard labor on contempt-of-court charges. The charges stemmed from a November 2009 commentary that criticized the government's prosecution of *Post* News Editor Chansa Kabwela, defense lawyer Remy Mainza said. Kabwela was acquitted in 2009 on baseless charges of obscenity that had drawn international derision. M'membe, a former CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee, was free in late year pending an appeal.



Americas

Americas

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From Brazil, where judges issue censorship orders by the dozens, to Venezuela, where crime photos are banned, censorship is on the rise. Thirty years after democratization, is Latin America slipping back to the era of dictators? By Carlos Lauría

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Section break: A protest against anti-press violence in Mexico City. (AP/Marco Ugarte)
Analysis: The Venezuelan newspaper El Nacional leaves white space for an image the government won't allow. (Reuters/Jorge Silva)

In Latin America, A Return of Censorship

by *Carlos Lauría*

As the preeminent political family in the northeastern state of Maranhão for more than 40 years, the Sarneys are used to getting their way in Brazilian civic life. So when the leading national daily *O Estado de S. Paulo* published allegations in June 2009 that linked José Sarney, the Senate president and the nation's former leader, to nepotism and corruption, the political clan did not sit idly by. The Sarneys turned to a judge in Brasília, winning an injunction that halted *O Estado* from publishing any more reports about the allegations. Eighteen months later, as 2010 came to a close, the ban remained in effect despite domestic and international outcry.

The reports in *O Estado*—based in part on leaked transcripts from phone conversations that were tapped during a federal investigation—charged that Sarney used his position in the Senate to award jobs and give raises to his friends and family. The judge's ruling, an indefinite injunction issued without hearing arguments from the newspaper, became the most notorious of the numerous recent instances in which Brazilian courts have wielded censorship powers.

The Brazilian constitution guarantees free expression and prohibits censorship, but hundreds of lawsuits have filled court dockets in recent years, filed by businesspeople, politicians, and public officials who allege that critical journalists are offending their honor or invading their privacy, CPJ research shows. The plaintiffs in these cases typically seek injunctions to bar the defendants from publishing anything further about them or to remove the offending online material.

The resulting censorship was illustrated in a 2010 global report by Google, which said that Brazilian authorities had demanded that content be removed from the company's servers on 398 occasions in the first six months of the year, twice the number of the next country, Libya. Most of

the Brazilian demands were court orders, Google said. In just the weeks leading up to the October 3 presidential elections, the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas found that Brazilian judges issued censorship orders in at least 21 cases. The center's analysis found that outlets across Brazil were fined, ordered to remove content, or barred from publishing or airing specific information.

"It is blatantly unconstitutional in the first place. And in the case of *O Estado*, the delay in revoking the ruling is indefensible," Ricardo Pedreira, executive director of the association of Brazilian publishers, said in a piece in the newspaper.

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Regional censorship reaches one of its highest points in 30 years.

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Brazil is among several Latin American countries where censorship is on the rise, a CPJ analysis shows. In Venezuela, a court barred local media from publishing images of crime in the run-up to the September legislative elections. The decision followed years of politicized regulatory rulings that removed critical Venezuelan broadcasters from the airwaves. In Ecuador, when a police rebellion threw the country into turmoil in September, the government of President Rafael Correa ordered radio and TV stations to halt their own reports and carry state news broadcasts only. Led by Correa, who has described the news media as "trash-talking" and "liars," the administration has also censored Teleamazonas, Ecuador's most critical broadcaster, on other occasions.

In vast, lawless areas of Mexico and Honduras, reporters are exercising self-censorship on major issues such as crime and corruption out of fear that they will be targeted for reprisal. Everything from gun battles in the streets to municipal malfeasance is going unexamined.

Censorship in Latin America has reached one of its highest points since most of the region underwent democratization 30 years ago, CPJ's analysis shows. Though censorship is not of the same extent as that seen during the era of military dictatorships, when journalists were "disappeared" in large numbers and armed forces dictated what could be reported, its re-emergence is deeply worrisome.

"As someone who watched the effects of censorship in the 1970s and the 1980s, a blatant and horrible censorship, I feel that today's censorship is much more insidious," said June Carolyn Erlick, a former Latin American correspondent who is now publications director at the David Rockefeller

Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. “You never know where the censorship is coming from—through threats, attacks on the streets, new laws, or lack of access. The threats are always there and sometimes lead to self-censorship even before censorship begins.”

As part of an investigation known as “Operação Fator,” Brazilian federal police recorded hundreds of hours of phone conversations in which Fernando Sarney, son of the Senate president, discussed business and legislative affairs. *O Estado* published articles based on leaked transcripts of more than 300 hours of conversations involving the younger Sarney, the focus of an ongoing federal probe. “The investigation showed a senator and close family members were negotiating jobs and benefits as if the Senate were a private company,” said Marcelo Beraba, one of *O Estado*’s top editors. And the paper was just getting started on the story.

But on July 31, 2009, the Sarneys convinced Judge Dácio Vieira to grant an injunction barring the paper from covering any aspect of the investigation. Vieira said the paper would be fined 150,000 reais (US\$88,000) for every story published on the case, and he extended the ban to any other outlet that reprinted *O Estado*’s stories. The judge issued the ruling just a day after the Sarneys filed their motion, and without holding any substantive hearings. Unlike most civil matters, there was no underlying lawsuit, such as a defamation claim; the Sarneys sought only the publication ban. The paper has appealed the decision to the Supreme Federal Tribunal, Brazil’s highest court, and has continued reporting on the Sarney case in hopes of one day printing its findings. A high court decision is not expected until mid-2011.



The ban generated widespread coverage in Brazilian and international news media, which may have contained the censorship. “I believe that Fernando Sarney didn’t file for an injunction against other media because of the extremely negative impact *O Estado’s* ban had on public opinion,” Mariana Uemura Sampaio, an attorney for the newspaper, told CPJ. The case sparked a vigorous debate on judicial censorship in Brazil, the need to conduct in-depth reporting on political corruption, and the ethics of leaking investigative material to the press.

In Venezuela, rampant crime was among the public’s top concerns in the weeks leading up to the September congressional elections. In the absence of official statistics, watchdog groups estimate that 16,000 people are murdered annually. So when the Caracas-based daily *El Nacional* published an archival photo of corpses piling up in a local morgue to illustrate an August 13 front-page report on rising crime, it struck a chord with a concerned readership. It also angered the administration of President Hugo Chávez.

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In Venezuela, a court ruling follows years of regulatory censorship.

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Chávez called the image “pornographic”—the corpses, of course, were unclothed—and a court that normally handles juvenile matters suddenly ruled that *El Nacional* could not publish “images, information, and publicity of any type that contains blood, guns, alarming messages, or physical aggression.” The court’s order said that such material could harm children. In a show of solidarity, the critical daily *Tal Cual* reprinted the morgue photograph on August 16, sparking a second, wider ruling from the juvenile court. This time, the court barred all Venezuelan print media from publishing violent images for one month.

Public outcry limited the damage, according to Ewald Scharfenberg, executive director of the press freedom group IPYS Venezuela. Facing domestic and international condemnation—including protests from the Organization of American States and the United Nations—the court lifted the media-wide ban two days later and allowed *El Nacional* to resume text coverage of violence. But photo prohibitions remained in place against *El Nacional* and *Tal Cual* in late year. *Tal Cual* referenced photos it couldn’t publish to accompany certain stories, while *El Nacional* redesigned its cover logo, replacing the “o” in its name with a face whose mouth is bandaged. If anything, Scharfenberg said, the episode fueled much

heavier news coverage of crime and helped sharpen the public's focus on the issue.

The censorship also highlighted the Chávez administration's systematic campaign to stifle dissent. Authorities used their regulatory powers over the public airwaves to remove dozens of critical radio stations in 2009 and, two years earlier, to pull the license of RCTV, the country's oldest broadcaster and one of Chávez's top critics. Venezuelan authorities have consistently failed to conduct impartial and transparent reviews of broadcast licenses, CPJ research shows, often reaching predetermined and politically motivated decisions. In December 2010, the legislature adopted measures allowing regulators even more leeway to revoke broadcast licenses, while barring online content that "disrespects authorities."

"The government has succeeded in gradually silencing critical voices through a campaign of selective intimidation, discriminatory use of state resources, and the closure of independent broadcast media," said Phil Gunson, a veteran correspondent for *The Economist* and *The Miami Herald*. "The implications for Venezuelan democracy are very disturbing, since large numbers of people have extremely limited access to any voice other than that of the government."

In Ecuador, President Correa's administration has sought to supplant independent voices with its own. On September 30, when hundreds of police officers staged violent nationwide protests over plans to reduce bonus pay, the Communications Ministry ordered broadcasters to halt their own news reports and carry programming from the state-owned Ecuador TV. The national networks Ecuavisa, Telemazonas, and Canal Uno interrupted their broadcasts at around 2 p.m., switching to the government station's programming. Ecuador TV covered events from the government's viewpoint, showing interviews with an array of high-ranking officials, local journalists said. Six hours later, the ministry lifted its order, and broadcasters returned to their own programming.

The pre-emption appeared to violate Ecuadoran law. Under a state of emergency, which the government had declared, the president and members of his administration are authorized to interrupt programming in order to broadcast official messages. But neither Correa nor the government broadcast any messages, journalists said. Instead, the decree cut off independent media coverage and replaced it with government-approved information, thus depriving Ecuadorans of diverse sources at a vital moment. (The protests were so chaotic that, at one point, rebel officers blockaded Correa inside a hospital for about 12 hours.)

In October, the president's communications office ordered Telemazonas to air a government rebuttal in the middle of a political talk show

hosted by the critical analyst María Josefa Coronel, according to news reports. Teleamazonas, a Quito-based private network known for its harsh opposition to Correa's policies, was itself forced off the air for three days in late 2009 after regulators found the station had "incited public disorder" with a story about the effect that natural gas exploration off southern Puná Island would have on the local fishing industry.

César Ricaurte, executive director of the local press freedom group Fundamedios, said the Correa administration's intolerance of criticism was creating an atmosphere of intimidation and self-censorship. "Under the current climate, it has become very difficult for journalists to work free of government interference," he said. "Official harassment against the critical press has increased substantially, and journalists are gradually indulging in self-censorship."

Censorship was a central tenet of the dictatorships and autocratic governments that dominated the region 30 or more years ago. Armed forces killed and disappeared reporters in Argentina, creating a climate of fear that silenced the press. The Pinochet dictatorship in Chile imprisoned, tortured, and disappeared journalists while imposing strict censorship over news coverage. Brazilian army officials dictated what publishers and broadcast executives could write or broadcast. In Paraguay, Uruguay, Panama, and Haiti, the rules were simple: No independent press was allowed, and all papers were subject to seizure.

As the rest of the region changed over the past three decades, the Cuban government has retained its strict censorship regime. The country's constitution grants the Communist Party the right to control the press; it recognizes freedom of speech and the press only "in accordance with the goals of the socialist society." All media operate under the supervision of the Communist Party's Department of Revolutionary Orientation, which develops and coordinates propaganda strategies. Reporters who work independently are harassed, detained, jailed, or barred from traveling. For much of the past decade, Cuba has been among the world's worst jailers of the press. But while Cuban policies are a relic of the past, repression elsewhere in the region bodes ill for the future.

The new spike in regional censorship is linked to government abuse of legal and regulatory resources, according to Silvio Waisbord, associate professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University. While the tactics have evolved, he sees parallels between today's censorship and that of the dictators. As in the past, Waisbord said, "the result is a chilling effect in the media that often inhibits coverage on issues of public interest."

Another form of censorship, out of fear of violence, has reasserted its

grip on the region, as organized crime, corruption, and lawlessness spread over areas of Mexico and Central America. Widespread self-censorship has been the devastating consequence of lethal violence by drug syndicates and criminal gangs. Dozens of killings and disappearances, bomb attacks, and multiple threats have led Mexican reporters and news outlets to abandon not only investigative reporting but basic coverage of crime. In areas where rival traffickers are fighting for turf, reporters have been forced to write what the criminals have ordered, or simply stop publishing. “A new word has been written into the lexicon of Mexico’s drug war: Narco-censorship,” the *Los Angeles Times* noted in a story in August.

Nowhere was that more evident than in the border city of Reynosa, Tamaulipas state, where the Gulf cartel dictates what can and cannot be covered, CPJ found in a September special report, *Silence or Death in Mexico’s Press*. Bloody cartel warfare went on for months, but news outlets ignored the story out of fear. The cartel controlled nearly every aspect of city government, journalists told CPJ, but newspapers could not report this to their readers.

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As it did in Colombia, violence sparks self-censorship in Mexico.

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“In Mexico, censorship as a result of violence is generating similar consequences as it once did in Colombia,” Waisbord said. “It’s a failure of government to guarantee the rule of law.” Self-censorship was pervasive during Colombia’s five-decade civil conflict, as journalists and editors feared reprisal from all sides. Beginning in the 1980s, at the height of the Colombian drug cartels’ power, local media joined forces to investigate and denounce criminal violence from drug lords. Both violence and self-censorship have receded in Colombia in the past decade, although it remains one of the world’s most dangerous countries for the press.

Criminal organizations and impunity have forced the news media into silence in other Central American countries as well. A wave of deadly violence that resulted in the murder of nine reporters in Honduras, at least three in direct reprisal for their work, has led to widespread self-censorship in the local media. Honduran authorities have minimized the crimes and have been negligent in pursuing the killers. In July, a CPJ special report found that the government of President Porfirio Lobo was fostering a climate of intimidation and censorship, allowing criminals to murder with impunity.

Three decades of democratization in Latin America have not fostered all of the legal and judicial reforms necessary to protect press freedom. As lawlessness spreads throughout vast areas of the hemisphere, dysfunctional judicial systems have failed to prosecute those responsible for attacking the press, creating a climate of impunity that perpetuates the cycle of violence. Some democratically elected leaders, at the same time, have shown marked disdain for the institutions of democracy by abusing state resources to stifle dissent and silence critics. In some instances, powerful figures have used politicized courts to countermand constitutional guarantees of free expression.

The resulting rise in censorship—whether a product of government repression, judicial interference, or intimidation from criminal groups—is undermining the ability of the Latin American press to report the news. As the number of critical voices and the amount of investigative reporting are diminishing, topics of international importance such as drug trafficking, corruption, and human rights abuses are going underreported or entirely uncovered.

As an essential first step in combating the problems, the press can leave their differences behind and come together in a unified front. “Journalists can fight censorship by uniting both in national groups and across borders,” said Erlick, the former correspondent now at Harvard. In Venezuela, for example, Scharfenberg said, the press has yet to react in a unified way when critical journalists are excluded from press conferences, government buildings, or official events. “These discriminatory and arbitrary decisions can only come to an end if there is a strong reaction from a united press corps,” he said.

When organized crime groups muzzle the press in regions of Mexico, the national media can take the lead by expressing full support for their colleagues. Journalists in large urban centers can identify and widely publicize the problems affecting the regional press. That sort of high-profile coverage will draw international attention and exert pressure on the federal government to guarantee the constitutional right to free expression. And throughout Latin America, journalists can harness new and traditional technology to build public awareness that censorship not only harms the press, but deprives everyone of the right to information and free expression.

Carlos Lauría, CPJ's senior program coordinator for the Americas, is the co-author of the 2010 CPJ special report, Silence or Death in Mexico's Press.

Summaries in this chapter were researched and written by Senior Program Coordinator Carlos Lauría, Research Associate José Barbeito, CPJ Washington Representative Frank Smyth, CPJ's Mexico City-based representative, Mike O'Connor, and CPJ's Brazil consultant, Claudia Duarte.

Argentina

President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's administration accused top executives of the country's two leading newspapers, *Clarín* and *La Nación*, of conspiring with the former military regime to commit crimes against humanity, allegations that dramatically escalated existing government-media tensions. In making a claim as controversial as it was aggressive, Kirchner called on the courts to decide whether the newspapers colluded with the dictatorship to force the sale of a newsprint supplier in 1976. The clash deepened divisions within the press itself, as journalists took sides on administration policies and tactics. Political talk shows on state-owned media lambasted government critics in the press. The space for balanced and unbiased journalism was significantly reduced, analysts said.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Kirchner accuses two papers of colluding with the military dictatorship in 1976.
- » Legislation would restrict media ownership in newsprint companies.

KEY STATISTIC

400

Pages in government report that claims *Clarín* and *La Nación* media groups conspired with dictators.

Many analysts believed that the administration was trying to financially harm the two media companies and minimize their influence, particularly that of *Clarín*, with which it had often clashed in recent years. "Since the Kirchner-*Clarín* fight broke out, the government has taken actions unequivocally aimed at damaging *Clarín's* business," wrote Silvio Waisbord, associate professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University, in a *Columbia Journalism Review* article.

The storm erupted in August, when Kirchner presented the findings of an official investigation into the history and economic activities of newsprint manufacturer Papel Prensa. The government's 400-page report,

titled “*Papel Prensa: The Truth*,” alleged that the two newspapers conspired with military dictators to gain control of *Papel Prensa*, then leveraged their newsprint ownership to drive other publications out of business. In a nationally televised speech, Kirchner said the Graiver family, which owned the newsprint company, made the deal under duress from the military junta. David Graiver, a financier with close connections to the Montoneros guerrilla group, died in a mysterious plane crash shortly before the sale. His wife, Lidia Papaleo, was later tortured by the dictatorship.

By 2010, *Papel Prensa* was supplying newsprint to 170 dailies nationwide, 75 percent of the domestic market. Grupo Clarín owned 49 percent of the company’s shares; *La Nación*, 22.5 percent; and the government, 27.5 percent. *Clarín* and *La Nación* denied any illegality in the purchase of the newsprint producer and accused the government of trying to undermine their businesses for narrow political purposes. In a joint statement, they described the government move as an assault against press freedom itself, a position supported by the Inter American Press Association, the regional publishers group. They also questioned the timing of the accusation: “Never, in 27 years of democracy, has *Papel Prensa* faced an administrative or judicial question about its origin.” The outlets said the persecution was the government’s attempt to rewrite history “as a means of persecution and retaliation.” They said that the Graiver family sold *Papel Prensa* for economic reasons, and was not under pressure from the military. A day after Kirchner’s announcement, both papers published a full-page ad from Isidoro Graiver, one of the family members who negotiated the sale, saying the transaction was done without pressure.

Critics also questioned the neutrality of the report, pointing out that it was produced by Interior Secretary Guillermo Moreno, who has had a deeply adversarial relationship with the newspapers. In August, Moreno appeared at a meeting of the *Papel Prensa* board of directors with boxing gloves.

After submitting the report to the judiciary for a full investigation, Kirchner said the courts should rule on the validity of the sale, and whether the owners of the media companies should be charged with crimes against humanity. The government, legal experts said, pursued human rights charges against the companies because any other allegation could be dismissed due to statutes of limitations. The investigation was assigned to federal Judge Arnaldo Corazza, who was conducting an ongoing probe of crimes committed by the military dictatorship, press reports said. The judge had made no comment on the case by late year.

The *Papel Prensa* accusations deepened divisions in an already polarized press. While reporters at *Clarín* and *La Nación* said Kirchner was engaged in a campaign to silence critics, journalists sympathetic to the

government said that the Papel Prensa investigation was necessary to establish the role of the media during the dictatorship. A group of intellectuals close to the government argued that both *La Nación* and *Clarín* have been silent about crimes committed against opponents during military rule. “The world of Argentine journalism is divided between journalists K (for the Kirchners) and journalists anti-K,” wrote Waisbord in the *Columbia Journalism Review*. “As a result, the middle ground for journalism with nuance, distance, equanimity, and even accuracy has narrowed.”

In October, the administration introduced legislation in Congress to declare newsprint supply a matter of public interest subject to government regulation. Kirchner said that regulating the production, distribution, and sale of newsprint would guarantee equal access, fair prices, and distribution to all of the country’s newspapers. The bill calls for newsprint to be sold at the same price to all buyers. It would also ban newspapers from holding more than a 10 percent share in newsprint businesses, a requirement that would force *Clarín* and *La Nación* to relinquish control of Papel Prensa. The bill was stalled in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Congress, in late year.

Some legal scholars warned that a bill regulating newsprint production could violate constitutional guarantees and the American Convention on Human Rights, *La Nación* reported. Article 32 of the Argentine Constitution states “the Federal Congress shall not pass laws that restrict freedom of the press or place it under federal jurisdiction,” while Article 13 of the American Convention says more explicitly that “the right of expression may not be restricted by indirect methods or means, such as the abuse of government or private controls over newsprint.” Supporters of the newsprint initiative rejected the argument. “Its goal is to ensure access to fair pricing of the critical supply, with Congress’ oversight, in which the ruling party is in the minority, and with the counsel of the concerned newspapers,” the influential journalist Horacio Verbitsky wrote in the Buenos Aires daily *Página 12*, a newspaper supportive of administration policies.

The Papel Prensa report came a week after the Kirchner administration decided to cancel the license of the Grupo Clarín-owned Internet service provider, Fibertel. The government said Fibertel’s merger with the company’s cable television unit, Cablevision SA, was illegal. Cablevision vowed to fight the action in court, describing the decision as “totalitarian.”

These were simply the latest episodes in a long-running feud between the government and Grupo Clarín, the nation’s largest media conglomerate. The company—owner of newspapers, radio stations, broadcast and cable television outlets, and the Internet service provider—has had an antagonistic relationship with Kirchner since a 2008 conflict over farm

taxes. The government has accused *Clarín* and other private media of biased coverage.

Clarín has been subjected to official harassment, CPJ research shows. In September 2009, about 200 tax agents raided *Clarín's* offices after the paper ran a front-page story alleging the government had improperly granted a farm subsidy. *Clarín* and others decried the raid as government intimidation. In August, the newspaper's offices in Rosario were vandalized. The same month, posters and graffiti attacking *Clarín* and its executives appeared in several Buenos Aires locations.

Since the dispute heated up, analysts said, the government made a number of decisions clearly directed at damaging the media group's businesses. These included the enactment of a broadcast law in 2009 that the government billed as democratizing the airwaves but that many analysts saw as weakening Grupo Clarín. Regulations capped the number of radio and television stations a media company could own and banned companies from holding both broadcast and cable TV channels, requirements that would force the conglomerate to sell some of its assets. While the government said the law would curb monopolies, media owners and opposition politicians saw it as a means for the government to exert greater control over news media.

Legal challenges slowed the law's implementation in 2010. In October, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court injunction that suspended the requirement that media companies divest holdings within a year. But the high court also said the injunction should not block implementation of the overall law. CPJ was monitoring the implementation to ensure that broadcast regulators were not subjected to political interference.

The September murder of a journalist in an impoverished Buenos Aires neighborhood took news media by surprise; lethal violence against the press has been rare in Argentina. Reporter Adams Ledesma Valenzuela was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants, news reports said. Ledesma, 46, a Bolivian-born reporter for the community weekly *Mundo Villa* and director of local TV station Mundo Villa, was found near his home in Villa 31, a shantytown in northern Buenos Aires. His wife, Ruth Marlene Torrico, told CPJ that the journalist left home around 4 a.m., possibly to fix an electrical problem in the neighborhood. Her husband, who was found with a screwdriver in his pocket, was often called on to make small neighborhood repairs, she said. Known as a community advocate, Ledesma often wrote about local problems such as unsanitary conditions and damaged roads, *Mundo Villa's* editor, Joaquín Ramos, told CPJ.

Ledesma's wife reported being threatened after the attack; a woman warned her at the murder scene that something similar could happen

to her and her six children if they didn't leave the neighborhood. Two women approached her sister the following day and made similar threats, she said. Authorities assigned federal agents to patrol the family's home. Judge Mauricio Zamudio issued an arrest warrant in October against a Paraguayan identified only by the nickname "El Pichu," but authorities had not located the suspect by year's end. In an interview with the newspaper *Perfil*, Ledesma had said he planned to investigate celebrities coming to the shantytown to purchase drugs.

The sudden death of former President Néstor Kirchner of cardiac arrest on October 26 stunned the country. The 60-year-old Kirchner, who ruled from 2003 to 2007, was widely credited with bringing the nation back from the economic collapse of 2001. When he was president, he had a contentious relationship with the press. During his three terms as provincial governor in Santa Cruz and his one term as president, he institutionalized a system in which the state rewarded supportive media with government advertising while punishing critical media by withholding ads. In November 2009, during his wife's administration, Congress decriminalized defamation on issues of public interest, a major advance for press freedom in the region.

Brazil

Continuing a pattern of extensive censorship imposed from the bench, regional judges banned dozens of news outlets from covering some of the most important topics of the day, including issues involving the October general election, good governance, and public integrity. The national daily *O Estado de S. Paulo* faced a censorship order throughout the year that prevented the paper and its website from reporting on a corruption investigation involving the family of Senate President José Sarney. A provincial reporter was murdered in reprisal for his work, while other reporters and media workers operating outside large urban centers faced attacks as they covered politics and corruption.

Regional courts banned news media from reporting on a wide array of important public issues, CPJ research showed. In May, a civil court in the state of São Paulo ordered the daily *Diário do Grande ABC* to stop publishing stories on alleged government mismanagement of public school supplies after the mayor of São Bernardo do Campo said the paper was damaging his reputation. In September, an electoral court in the state of Mato Grosso prohibited the *Gazeta Comunicação* media group from running stories about Deputy Carlos Abicalil's position on abortion.

News reports said the congressman supported legislation decriminalizing abortion, a claim he denied. The same month, an electoral court in Tocantins state barred 84 media outlets, including *O Estado de S. Paulo*, from publishing and broadcasting stories on a criminal investigation involving Gov. Carlos Gaguim. A higher tribunal overturned the decision in Tocantins state, but many censorship orders remained in effect.

Over the past several years, businesspeople, politicians, and public officials have filed hundreds of lawsuits alleging that critical news media were offending their honor or invading their privacy, CPJ research showed. The plaintiffs in these cases typically seek injunctions to bar the press from publishing anything further about them or to remove offending online material. A 2010 report by Google said Brazilian authorities had demanded that content be removed from the company's servers on 398 occasions

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN BRAZIL

KEY STATISTIC

- » Judicial censorship rampant; order bars paper from covering corruption allegations.
- » Convictions won in journalist's murder as Brazil makes strides against impunity.

398 Demands to remove online content made by Brazilian authorities to Google in the first six months of 2010.

in the first six months of the year, twice the number of the next country, Libya. Most of the Brazilian demands were court orders, Google said. The Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas documented 21 cases of judicial censorship in just the weeks leading up to the October 3 presidential election. The study showed censorship was imposed on newspapers, broadcasters, news websites, and blogs. Several outlets across Brazil were fined, ordered to remove content, barred from publishing or airing specific information, and sued by candidates and political parties, the Knight analysis found.

One of the most prominent censorship orders barred the daily *O Estado de S. Paulo* and its website from publishing reports on alleged nepotism and corruption involving Fernando Sarney, son of José Sarney, the Senate leader and former president. The order was first imposed in July 2009 after *O Estado*—citing leaked wiretap transcripts from a federal investigation—charged that the Sarney family had used its influence to award jobs and give raises to friends and relatives. Judge Dácio Vieira banned further coverage by *O Estado* and said the paper would be fined 150,000 reais (US\$88,000) for each story published on the case. The Supreme Federal

Tribunal, the country's highest court, was due to rule on the paper's appeal in 2011. The paper has argued that the ban is unconstitutional.

The Supreme Federal Tribunal has been generally supportive of press freedom in its rulings, including a September 2010 decision striking down a prohibition on broadcasters using "trickery, montages or other features of audio or video to degrade or ridicule a candidate, party or coalition." The 1997 law established fines of up to US\$60,000 for media that poked fun at politicians, a ban designed to keep humorists and comedians from lampooning candidates during the election. Carlos Augusto Ayres de Freitas Britto, the court's vice president, said only a state of emergency could warrant such limits on free expression.

Dilma Rousseff, an economist and former chief of staff for President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, defeated former São Paulo Gov. José Serra in an October 31 presidential runoff. Rousseff had a contentious relationship with the press during a bitter political campaign; Lula himself accused the news media of being biased against his protégé. In a speech soon after her victory, Rousseff pledged that her government would guarantee freedom of expression in Brazil, although she did not provide any specifics. Lula, whose approval ratings remained very high in opinion polls, ended his eight years as president with a mixed press freedom record. The government conducted several successful investigations into journalist murders, representing a major step forward in the country's campaign against impunity. But judicial censorship has become a grave problem, seriously inhibiting the ability of journalists to report on issues of public interest. Reporters continued to be killed in the country's interior, where the state has a weak presence, while coverage of organized crime exposed even urban reporters to serious risks.

Provincial reporters were vulnerable to attack for their reporting on local politics and corruption. Francisco Gomes de Medeiros, news director of the local station Radio Caicó, was shot to death on October 18 in the northern city of Caicó. Police arrested a suspect identified as João Francisco dos Santos a day later and said he had confessed to killing Gomes in reprisal for the reporter's coverage of his 2007 armed robbery conviction. But a state prosecutor told local news media that he believed dos Santos was actually a hired assassin. By December, investigators accused Vladimir Souza do Nascimento, a convicted felon serving a prison sentence for drug trafficking, of hiring dos Santos. News reports quoted investigators as saying that Gomes' coverage had hindered criminal activities being run by Souza from prison.

In May, three hooded attackers abducted and tortured Gilvan Luiz Pereira, publisher and editor of *Sem Nome*, a weekly known for its critical coverage of the local government in Juazeiro do Norte, Ceará state,

according to local news accounts. But police intercepted the kidnappers' vehicle in the city's outskirts, causing the assailants to flee and allowing the journalist to be rescued, according to the news website *Portal Imprensa*. Pereira told CPJ that he was hospitalized for four days and needed 42 stitches to close a head wound. State police accused two mayoral bodyguards of kidnapping and torturing the journalist. The case was pending in late year.

In an important step in combating impunity in journalist murders, prosecutors won convictions in the 2007 killing of reporter Luiz Carlos Barbon Filho. In March, a court in São Paulo sentenced two military police officers and a businessman to 18 years and four months in prison apiece on charges of aggravated murder and criminal association, press reports said. A third police officer was convicted and given 16 years and four months in prison on charges of aggravated murder. Hooded assailants shot Barbon, 37, at close range while he was sitting on a bar terrace in the southern city of Porto Ferreira. The journalist had drawn wide attention with a 2003 report on a local child prostitution ring. The report, published in *Realidade*, a daily owned by Barbon, resulted in the convictions of 10 people.

Separately, in November, police in Rio de Janeiro arrested the drug kingpin and fugitive Eliseo Felicio de Souza during a police raid in the notorious shantytown Complexo do Alemão, press reports said. De Souza, one of seven men convicted in the 2002 killing of TV Globo reporter Tim Lopes, had escaped from prison in 2007 in the midst of a 23-year term.

The Chamber of Deputies took a step toward greater government transparency in April when it passed a bill on access to public information. The legislation would guarantee citizens the right to information on public agencies, including budgets, salaries, staffing, and internal reports. The legislation, pending in the Senate in late year, would require government agencies to provide requested information within 20 days.

The administration prepared a bill to regulate the Internet, sparking concerns among bloggers and free press defenders. The initial draft for a new "Civil Rights Framework for the Internet in Brazil" would have seriously restricted online reporting, Internet experts said. In one of the most controversial sections of the draft, website hosts would have become liable for their users' content if they did not immediately remove it after receiving notice of a complaint by a third party. CPJ Internet Advocacy Coordinator Danny O'Brien was among a number of domestic and international critics. The Ministry of Justice revised the provision in response to the criticism, making hosts liable only if they fail to comply with a direct court order to remove content. The bill was being readied for introduction to Congress in late year.

Colombia

President Álvaro Uribe Vélez ended his two terms in office with a decidedly mixed press freedom record. CPJ research charted a drop in lethal violence during his administration: Eight reporters were killed in direct relation to their work in his first two years in office, while six died over the remaining six years of his tenure. The government has cited a journalist protection program and an improved overall security climate as reasons.

Yet the press continued to operate under extreme duress as Uribe left office in mid-year. Journalists still worked under threat from all sides in the civil conflict, and many said they survived primarily because they practiced self-censorship. Uribe himself maintained a hostile relationship with the media, occasionally making unfounded accusations that critical journalists had ties to guerrilla groups. The administration was also swept up in a major espionage scandal in which national intelligence officials under Uribe's supervision engaged in unlawful phone tapping, e-mail interception, and surveillance of journalists and political opponents. Despite the president's public pledges to root out those responsible for the espionage, government investigations ground away with little tangible results. Only two convictions had been obtained by late year.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Progress slow in probe of illegal espionage that targeted journalists.
- » One journalist murdered. Deadly violence slows, but danger remains.

KEY STATISTIC

4

Provincial reporters forced into exile due to threats.

Juan Manuel Santos, a 58-year-old former journalist and defense minister, assumed the presidency after winning a decisive majority in a June 20 runoff election against former Bogotá Mayor Antanas Mockus. During his inaugural speech, he promised to continue the Uribe administration security policies that he helped direct as defense minister from 2006 until 2009. Santos' career as a journalist—during which he served as deputy director of his family's daily newspaper *El Tiempo*—led local journalists to believe that tensions may ease between the government and news media.

Right-wing paramilitary groups, left-wing guerrillas, and drug traffickers continued to target provincial journalists as a low-level conflict churned away. Threats forced at least four provincial reporters into exile, according to the Bogotá-based Foundation for Freedom of the Press, or

FLIP. Guerrillas and paramilitaries each sent fliers to newsrooms and reporters' homes identifying journalists as targets, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. In August, a motorcycle-riding gunman fired at least five shots at journalist Marco Tulio Valencia in the town of Mariquita, Tolima province. Valencia, who escaped injury, said he had received numerous prior death threats related to his reporting on the drug trade in Tolima. Risky topics also included government corruption, civil conflicts, land disputes, and other criminal activities, local journalists said. Edgar Astudillo, a veteran radio reporter who covered crime, told CPJ that two vans with about 20 men arrived at his home in Montería, Córdoba, in May. One of the men demanded that the reporter stop airing news about Los Paisas, a gang seen as a successor to the right-wing paramilitary group United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). Astudillo relocated to the capital.

Uribe's government said that about 30,000 AUC fighters were demobilized between 2003 and 2006 in exchange for prison terms of five to eight years under the Justice and Peace Law, a measure that granted leniency to members of illegal groups in exchange for laying down arms and confessing to their crimes. The extent of the demobilization, however, had been contested by local rights groups, which claimed that around 10,000 AUC members remained active under different names, such as Los Paisas.

Clodomiro Castilla Ospino, editor and publisher of the newsmagazine *El Pulso del Tiempo*, was killed on March 19 as he was reading a book outside his home in Montería. Castilla, who also contributed to the local radio station La Voz de Montería, had received threats for at least four years in relation to his coverage of links between local politicians, landowners, and right-wing paramilitaries, local journalists told CPJ. In July 2008, the journalist testified before the Colombian Supreme Court about links between members of the National Congress and paramilitary groups. Shortly before his death, he covered allegations that state funds were illegally used in the 2006 congressional political campaign.

Uribe condemned Castilla's murder and offered a reward of 50 million Colombian pesos (US\$26,000). The investigation was quickly transferred from the local prosecutor's office to the attorney general's office in Bogotá, but no subsequent developments were reported. Tania Castilla Florez, the reporter's daughter and a witness in the case, was forced to resettle to Bogotá after she and her family had been followed several times by unidentified individuals.

The government had provided protection to Castilla for about three years because of threats against his life, FLIP said, but the Ministry of Interior withdrew the security in 2009 based on an intelligence review that indicated he was no longer under threat. Under the state protection program, a committee of government officials and civil-society

representatives meets regularly to assess security needs. In some cases, the government assigns direct protection, while in other cases it supports tactics such as relocation.

Provincial insecurity prompted the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to intervene in one case in April, ordering the Colombian government to provide protection for journalist Rodrigo Callejas Bedoya and his family. Callejas told CPJ he had covered drug trafficking, government corruption, illegal mining projects, and paramilitary financing for Radio Fresno and the newspaper *Región al Día*. After being provided with security, Callejas carried out his work with two bodyguards and a bullet-proof car.

The national media tracked the slow-paced government investigation into illegal spying that was carried out by the national intelligence agency, known as the DAS, from 2004 to 2009. Meeting with a delegation from CPJ and FLIP in May, Uribe condemned the espionage and expressed his commitment to investigating it. In August, a Bogotá judge sentenced Fernando Tavares, former intelligence director, and Jorge Alberto Lagos, former deputy director for counterintelligence, to eight years in prison apiece after they admitted to spying. Sixteen other DAS officials, including the agency's deputy director, José Miguel Narváez, were accused by the attorney general's office of participating in the espionage, and at least five were facing trial in late year, news reports said. In June, Narváez was also accused of masterminding the 1999 murder of journalist Jaime Garzón. That case was pending in late year.

In hearings convened by Inspector General Alejandro Ordóñez Maldonado, intelligence agents described an extensive government scheme that counted on the approval of high-ranking officials. "We were ordered to follow journalist Daniel Coronell because President Álvaro Uribe was very upset with Coronell's reporting about him and his family," the newsweekly *Semana* quoted DAS official Martha Leal as saying. Coronell, director of the national news program "Noticias Uno" and a columnist for *Semana*, was one of the harshest critics of the president's administration. In October, the inspector general's office, an independent agency that examines government activities, took disciplinary action against former Uribe chief of staff Bernardo Moreno, barring him from public office for 18 years for his role in the scheme. The same month, a House of Representatives committee opened a preliminary investigation into Uribe's actions in the case. By November, former DAS director María del Pilar Hurtadio fled to Panama, where she was granted political asylum. Hurtadio denied involvement in the spying scheme, saying she was a scapegoat.

Among the targets of the spying was Hollman Morris, another harsh government critic who had incurred the wrath of Uribe and high-ranking

administration officials. The president's characterizations of Morris as an "accomplice of terrorism" may have played a role in the U.S. government's initial decision to deny the journalist a visa to study at Harvard University as a Nieman Fellow. The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá informed the journalist in June that he had been found ineligible for a visa under the Patriot Act, which bars those accused of terrorist activities. In a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, CPJ expressed concern that the State Department had been influenced by Colombian officials with a record of making unsubstantiated accusations against Morris because of his critical reporting. After CPJ and numerous other international groups came to the journalist's defense, the State Department granted Morris a visa in July.

Authorities questioned several people in an attempt to uncover those who plotted the 2002 murder of Orlando Sierra Hernández, deputy editor and columnist for the Manizales-based newspaper *La Patria*. The attorney general's office questioned former congressman Dixon Ferney Tapasco Triviño and his father, Ferney Tapasco González, in October, but had not charged either by late year, news reports said. (Authorities did bring charges against both for alleged links to right-wing paramilitaries.) Investigators also questioned two members of the elder Tapasco's security detail in connection with the editor's murder. Three men were convicted earlier in the decade on charges of carrying out the assassination.

A car bomb exploded at the Bogotá offices of national broadcaster Caracol Radio in August, injuring 36 people and damaging neighboring buildings, according to local news accounts. Attorney General Guillermo Mendoza told the news agency EFE that the motive and perpetrators were unclear. Three weeks later, police deactivated an explosive device in front of local broadcaster Linda Estéreo, an affiliate of Caracol Radio in the town of Doncello, Caquetá province, FLIP reported. Local police blamed the leftist guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) for the failed attack, news reports said. Luis Antonio Peralta, news director of Linda Estéreo, dismissed FARC involvement and said he believed the station's reporting on local corruption had prompted the attack, FLIP said.

Cuba

After years of intensive advocacy and international diplomacy, 17 independent journalists swept up in the government's 2003 Black Spring crackdown were finally freed from an unjust and inhumane imprisonment. The Roman Catholic Church, with participation from Spanish officials, struck an agreement in July with the government of President Raúl Castro

Ruz that called for the release of all 52 prisoners still being held seven years after the massive crackdown on political dissent and independent journalism. The deal as outlined by the church called for the release of all Black Spring detainees within four months, but three journalists and several other dissidents, apparently balking at Cuba's insistence that they leave the country in exchange for their freedom, remained in jail in late year. A fourth journalist, arrested in 2009, also remained in prison.

CPJ and other rights groups had campaigned extensively on behalf of the detainees. The death in February of imprisoned dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo appeared to tip the balance. Zapata, serving a 25-year sentence on charges of disrespecting authorities, died after an 85-day hunger strike in protest of appalling prison conditions. His death highlighted Cuba's cruel treatment of political prisoners, triggering worldwide condemnation and an unusual statement of regret from President Castro. It also sparked strong reactions from the jailed dissidents themselves, one of whom, Guillermo Fariñas, launched his own hunger strike.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » Cuba relents on political detainees, frees 17 journalists. Four still held.
- » In exile, freed journalists face economic, professional difficulties.

45

Poems that journalist and former detainee

Ricardo González Alfonso smuggled from prison.

The prospect of a second death, as Fariñas refused food and water for more than 130 days and was kept alive at a hospital through intravenous feeding, was too much for Cuban authorities to ignore. Facing widespread calls from the international community to end the political imprisonments, the government launched active negotiations with the church. By May, the two sides reached an agreement to transfer detainees being held in jails distant from their families to facilities closer to their homes. Six imprisoned journalists, including 2008 CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, were moved to prisons closer to their homes.

After a July 7 meeting with Cardinal Jaime Ortega, the Cuban government agreed to release the 52 Black Spring prisoners "within three to four months," the church said in a statement. Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos and Cuban counterpart Bruno Rodríguez took part in the meeting, according to the Cuban state newspaper *Granma*. The church

said the prisoners would be allowed to leave Cuba, but did not say that exile was a requirement for their release, according to press reports. In practice, however, every freed detainee was immediately flown to Spain, and those who refused remained in jail. Cuban authorities, intent on marginalizing opposition groups, have traditionally wanted political detainees to leave the country in exchange for their freedom.

Independent journalists Léster Luis González Pentón, Omar Ruíz Hernández, Julio César Gálvez Rodríguez, José Luis García Paneque, Pablo Pacheco Ávila, and Ricardo González Alfonso were the first six to arrive in Madrid on July 13. “I have nothing to celebrate until all my colleagues are released from jail,” Pacheco Ávila told CPJ in a telephone interview from Spain. Omar Rodríguez Saludes, Normando Hernández González, Mijail Bárzaga Lugo, Alfredo Pulido López, José Ubaldo Izquierdo, Juan Carlos Herrera Acosta, Fabio Prieto Llorente, Juan Adolfo Fernández Saínz, Víctor Rolando Arroyo Carmona, Miguel Galván Gutiérrez, and Alfredo Felipe Fuentes were released and flown to Spain with their families over the following three months.

Upon arrival in Spain, the local refugee group Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado organized the Cubans’ accommodations and offered them psychological support and medical care. While the Spanish press welcomed the arrival of the dissidents and featured their stories, the Spanish government offered a more restrained welcome, housing them in modest hostels in the suburbs of Madrid. Some journalists later relocated to cities such as Málaga and Valencia, while reporter Ubaldo Izquierdo moved to Chile, where he was granted political asylum. With Spain’s unemployment rate topping 20 percent and the economy in a deep recession, the new arrivals expected a difficult adjustment.

The Red Cross treated journalists with serious ailments. After seven years of confinement, the health of many reporters had deteriorated significantly, with problems ranging from diabetes and tumors to pneumonia and cataracts, CPJ found. In some cases, they had received scant medical attention; in many instances, unsanitary prison conditions exacerbated their medical problems.

Spain provided assistance with rent, clothes, food, transportation, jobs, education, and health services, as well as pocket money—85 euros monthly per couple (about US\$110), with small, additional amounts for other dependents, according to *The Miami Herald*. Spanish officials also offered the exiled Cubans the most favorable immigration status, known as Assisted International Protection, press reports said, which allowed them to apply for permanent residency and also offered the possibility of returning to Cuba with permission from Havana as well as Spanish citizenship in four to five years. Former prisoners were granted a work permit and were

allowed to travel freely, but many saw themselves as refugees. “I consider myself a political exile,” said Ruíz Hernández. “I didn’t come here for economic reasons; I came here for political reasons.” Some, like Hernández González, hoped to move to the United States, where they already had family. In October, the U.S. State Department announced that Cuban dissidents and family members in Spain would be allowed in the United States speedily under a program known as Significant Public Benefit Parole, according to *The Miami Herald*.

Independent reporters Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, Pedro Arguelles Morán, and Iván Hernández Carrillo were among the 11 Black Spring detainees who remained in Cuban prisons in late year. Laura Pollán, the wife of Maseda Gutiérrez, said he told her that “he will not let anybody throw him out of his country.” Maseda Gutiérrez, 67, was serving a 20-year prison term on antistate charges. In September, the Madrid daily *El País* quoted Spanish officials who said that detainees who wanted to stay in Cuba could be freed through a parole program. The Cuban government did not confirm such an arrangement, which could pose risks to the detainees even if it were provided. In granting parole, Cuban authorities could leave open the possibility of sending dissidents back to prison.

CPJ and other international press freedom and human rights groups had campaigned extensively on behalf of the Cuban detainees. From the beginning, CPJ thoroughly documented their condition, supported their families, and denounced abuses by authorities. In recent years, CPJ advocacy focused on engaging the Spanish government and European Union members to press Cuba for the release of the dissidents. In 2007, a CPJ delegation met several times with officers of the human rights unit of the Spanish Foreign Ministry, providing them with detailed information on the status of all imprisoned Cuban journalists.

The U.S. government said Cuba was moving in the right direction by releasing the prisoners, and some European leaders praised the move. But Cuba’s grudging decision to free the detainees was not enough to sway the European Union. On October 25, foreign ministers of the EU’s 27 member states decided to maintain the 1996 Common Position toward Cuba, turning back a request by Spain to withdraw the doctrine. The Common Position has linked improved European-Cuban relations to Havana’s progress on human rights and democratization. In Cuba, dissidents hailed the EU’s decision. In March, CPJ had sent a letter to Spanish President José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero in his role as head of the EU’s presidency, asserting that the EU should not ease the Common Position without demonstrable improvements in human rights.

The jailed editors and writers left a remarkable journalistic legacy, documenting abuses, crafting prose, and spinning poetry from their cells, then

smuggling their work out to the free world. González Alfonso smuggled out the 45 poems that became the collection *Men Without Faces* on tiny slips of paper rolled inside individual cigarettes. After the collection was published in Spain, the United States, and France, he was punished by his jailers. “My audacity had its price,” he wrote on the CPJ Blog in November. “I was sent to a punishment cell, where the bed was a concrete bench and the floor was carpeted in rodent excrement.” Yet he ultimately triumphed over his captors, he wrote. “The government failed in its attempt to silence voices capable of screaming and singing through prison bars and walls, past guards and terror.”

While the long-overdue release of dissidents was a relief for journalists and their families after years of suffering, the gesture did not augur fundamental changes in freedom of expression or access to information for all Cubans. “No changes have been made in terms of granting information for Cuban citizens, and independent reporting continues to be banned,” said Manuel Vázquez Portal, a Cuban poet, writer, and journalist who was freed and went into exile a year after he was arrested in the Black Spring crackdown.

In fact, the laws that allowed Cuba to jail reporters remain very much in place. They are written in Article 91 of the penal code, which imposes lengthy prison sentences or death for those who act against “the independence or the territorial integrity of the state,” and Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba’s National Independence and Economy, which imposes up to 20 years in prison for committing acts “aimed at subverting the internal order of the nation and destroying its political, economic, and social system.”

An emerging community of bloggers continued reporting on everyday experiences, providing Cuban citizens and the international community with information about the hardships of life in the Caribbean nation. While bloggers have not been jailed for their work, they have faced harassment and intimidation. “The summary trials that characterized the 2003 crackdown have been replaced by extralegal harassment such as official summonses and arbitrary detentions,” said independent Cuban blogger Laritza Diversent. “Extended jail terms have been replaced by social and cultural marginalization.” A 2009 CPJ special report, “Chronicling Cuba, bloggers offer fresh hope,” described how the blogging community has dealt with legal, economic, and technological limitations while expressing opinions that challenged the government’s viewpoint. “While the methods may have changed, the goals are quite the same,” Diversent said. “But Cuba is still a dark corner, a country where freedom of expression is a crime if it contradicts the goals of the socialist system.”

Ecuador

President Rafael Correa's administration used censorship powers throughout the year to supplant independent news and commentary. Authorities compelled critical broadcasters to interrupt news shows to air official rebuttals. And in September, when hundreds of police officers staged violent nationwide protests over plans to reduce their bonus pay, the Communications Ministry ordered broadcasters to halt their own news reports and carry programming from state-owned Ecuador TV.

Three people were killed and dozens injured in the September 30 police revolt, news reports said. Airports were temporarily shut down, highways were blocked, and looting was reported in the capital, Quito. The chaotic conditions reached their nadir when rebel officers shoved tear gas cans and bottles of water at Correa as the president tried to speak at a Quito police barracks. When he was taken to a local hospital to be treated for effects of the tear gas, the rebelling officers effectively barricaded him in the facility for about 12 hours, news reports said.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Journalists attacked, broadcasters censored during police uprising.
- » Correa administration orders broadcasters to air official rebuttals.

KEY STATISTIC

6

Hours during which broadcasters were told to suspend programming, carry state news reports on police revolt.

At least 22 reporters and photojournalists were attacked, threatened, or harassed as they covered the police uprising across the country, according to the Quito-based press freedom group Fundamedios. News reports described officers throwing tear gas canisters at reporters, assaulting journalists, and confiscating equipment.

In the midst of the rebellion, the Communications Ministry directed all TV and radio stations to interrupt their own programming and carry only the state broadcast. The national television networks Ecuavisa, Teleamazonas, and Canal Uno all switched to official news reports from Ecuador TV, whose coverage focused on the government's viewpoint and featured an array of interviews with high-ranking officials, journalists told CPJ. The ministry lifted the order after about six hours, journalists said.

Under a state of emergency, which the government had declared, the president and members of his administration are authorized to interrupt programming in order to broadcast official messages. But the government aired no announcements, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Instead, the decree cut off independent media coverage and replaced it with government-approved information, thus depriving Ecuadorans of diverse news sources at a critical moment.

Correa has made no secret of his contempt for much of the news media, calling critical journalists “ignorant,” “trash-talking,” and “liars.” Following in the steps of Venezuela President Hugo Chávez, the Ecuadoran leader has made regular use of *cadena*s—nationwide addresses that pre-empt all broadcasts—to air his views. The administration went further in 2010, using the broadcast law that authorizes *cadena*s to interrupt independent news shows and impose its views. Local press advocates said that the government was misusing the broadcast law and coercing speech.

On October 12, for example, the government ordered Quito-based Telem Amazonas to interrupt its political news program, “Los Desayunos,” to air an official rebuttal to comments made on a previous show that suggested the ruling party’s congressmen were irrelevant. María Josefa Coronel, the show’s host, had laughed at the remarks. The government notified Telem Amazonas, a network known for its harsh opposition views, that it had to air a rebuttal on the show’s next edition, and an official from the president’s communications office arrived at the station’s doorstep with an audio-tape, Deputy News Director Carlos Jijón told CPJ. In the rebuttal, a male voiceover disparaged Coronel and vilified the show’s panelists and guests, the Guayaquil-based daily *El Universo* reported. Former President Lucio Gutiérrez, leader of the political opposition, was among those guests.

The government also forced Telem Amazonas to air rebuttals on the morning news show “La Hora de Jorge Ortiz.” As in Coronel’s case, the tapes employed a male voiceover to criticize the host and challenge other comments made during the program, the show’s anchor, Ortiz, told CPJ. In August, the frustrated journalist resigned from Telem Amazonas, saying he didn’t want to stand in the way of the network’s pending sale, which needed government authorization.

While other channels were also directed to air rebuttals, Telem Amazonas has faced the most intense censorship. It was forced off the air for three days in December 2009 after regulators found it had “incited public disorder” with a story about the potential repercussions of natural gas exploration off southern Puná Island.

The Telem Amazonas sale, which was finalized in September, was prompted by relatively new legal requirements. Station owner Fidel Egas, who

was also a principal in Pichincha Bank, sold his ownership stake to local, Peruvian, and Spanish investors, according to news reports. Under constitutional changes passed in 2008, bankers are barred from owning media companies.

Authorities in the country's interior harassed a critical journalist. On August 20, a provincial court issued an arrest warrant for reporter Juan Alcívar on terrorism charges that CPJ found to be fabricated. Alcívar, a correspondent for the Quito-based daily *La Hora* and reporter for local radio station El Nuevo Sol, was covering a presidential visit to the northern town of La Concordia on July 19 when an unidentified individual tossed a tear gas canister. Two municipal employees accused the journalist, a critic of La Concordia Mayor Walter Ocampo, of tossing the canister. But *El Universo* reporter Manuel Toro, who was covering the president's visit, told CPJ that Alcívar clearly did not throw the canister. Alcívar had been threatened for his work as well. Fundamedios reported in July that vandals had painted a note on his car that said, "Shut up, and stop screwing with the mayor."

A legislative committee drafted a communications bill that included restrictive provisions such as a requirement that reporters hold university degrees, and vague demands that news media run "truthful information." Press advocates feared the bill, which was pending in late year, could open the door to further government censorship.

Haiti

Reflecting the devastation across all of Haitian society, the news media suffered massive losses in the 7.0-magnitude earthquake that struck just west of the capital, Port-au-Prince, on the afternoon of January 12. More than 220,000 people died and 1.5 million were left homeless, according to official estimates. Government offices, schools, hospitals, and entire neighborhoods were reduced to ruins, as was most of the infrastructure supporting Haitian news media. More than 95 percent of commercial and community radio stations—the primary source of news in Haiti—went off the air as their equipment and premises sustained heavy damage, according to Joseph Guylor Delva, president of the local press freedom group SOS Journalistes. The human losses were great as well: At least 30 journalists died in the earthquake and its immediate aftermath, SOS Journalistes reported.

"Before the earthquake, there was a vibrant radio scene here—it seemed as though every spot was taken on the FM band," Garry Pierre-Pierre,

editor and publisher of the Brooklyn-based weekly *Haitian Times*, wrote on the CPJ Blog on February 1. But surveying the landscape in Port-au-Prince three weeks after the quake, Pierre-Pierre described large-scale destruction that had nearly silenced Haitian radio news, a situation that would continue for many months.

An exception was Signal FM, the only station to continuously broadcast during and after the earthquake. The station's transmission facilities, east of the capital in Pétionville, withstood the quake and the dozens of tremors that followed. But as recounted by Haitian journalist Jean Roland Chery, who produced a series of stories on the crisis for the CPJ Blog, "The true credit goes to the station's staff members, who made extraordinary efforts and great sacrifices to inform the public during a period of chaos." Quoting Mario Viau, the station's managing director, Chery wrote that "Signal FM played a vital role in the aftermath of the disaster, serving as a primary conduit between victims and relief services and between victims themselves."

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN HAITI

KEY STATISTIC

- » Journalists persevere after quake, working from tents and homes.
- » Dozens of reporters jobless. Print media sustain heavy losses.

95

Percent of radio stations knocked off

the air by the January earthquake. Most had returned by late year.

Radio Television Caraïbes, the leading private broadcaster in Haiti, was quick to resume radio broadcasting, setting up makeshift operations in a tent just a few days after the quake. As work resumed, station director Patrick Moussignac said he hoped normalcy would return for traumatized Haitians. For that reason, he said, "Caraïbes Matin," a satirical look at political and social issues, was the first Radio Television Caraïbes program to go back on the air. "The population needs therapy, and we must learn to laugh again," Moussignac told CPJ. Radio Television Caraïbes served the local population in other ways as well. The station made its generator available to local residents, for example, so they could recharge their cell-phone batteries, CPJ's Chery reported. Hundreds of people took advantage of the offer, which enabled them to communicate with their families.

By late year, SOS Journalistes estimated that 97 percent of radio stations had resumed broadcasting, although many operated under exceptional

conditions—out of tents, for example, or private homes. Most of Haiti’s TV stations, including the major broadcasters TV Caraïbes, Tele Image, Tele Ginen, and Channel 11, were also back on the air in late year, Delva said.

Journalists, many of whom lost loved ones, homes, and belongings in the earthquake, worked in a climate of confusion, grief, and financial stress. The Port-au-Prince station Radio Metropole resumed programming on February 1 after broadcasting news via the Internet for two weeks. But Richard Widmaier, Radio Metropole’s director general, said the station’s financial condition was so precarious that paying its employees was difficult. Of about 50 pre-quake advertisers, only 10 maintained advertising after the catastrophe. “We have resumed our activities, but at what cost?” Widmaier wondered at the time. The station’s situation stabilized in late year as some advertising returned.

Print media also suffered significant losses. The two Haitian dailies, *Le Nouvelliste* and *Le Matin*, were forced to stop publishing, although they continued to disseminate news via the Internet. *Le Nouvelliste*—a 112-year-old Port-au-Prince newspaper, the oldest in Haiti—resumed daily publication in April. *Le Matin* continued to publish only weekly in late year, laying off about half of its staff of 30 and cutting the salaries of those who remained.

Bon Nouvel, Haiti’s sole Creole-language newspaper, disappeared under the rubble of the earthquake. The monthly’s Port-au-Prince offices were destroyed, as were the facilities of its printing unit, which specialized in the production of Creole-language books and documents. “This is a real blow not only to the promotion of the Creole language, but to literacy in Haiti,” said Rev. Jean Pierre Nzemba Wayi, *Bon Nouvel*’s director. He noted that the paper was popular among farmers who could not read or write French, and that it was considered an important touchstone for the Catholic community. *Bon Nouvel*, which specialized in coverage of Catholic issues, had not resumed publishing by late year.

Although no official data tracked the jobless rate in the profession, SOS Journalistes said at least 100 journalists nationwide remained unemployed in late year. Hardship prompted some reporters to leave the country. Among the prominent journalists who left was Ronald Leon, a veteran reporter for National Television of Haiti who also ran a journalism training school north of Port-au-Prince. Leon, who resettled in Florida, told CPJ that his school was heavily damaged in the quake and then looted by gangs. The demise of the school, whose last class had 15 students, illustrated a loss of media support services across the country.

Haitian journalists did not face traditional anti-press attacks to any significant degree, but the country’s press freedom movement suffered.

In recent years, local journalists were making headway in combating the country's record of anti-press violence. (At least five journalists were killed in direct relation to their work between 2000 and 2007.) The rate of violence had declined in recent years, and government accountability in addressing anti-press crimes had improved. But SOS Journalistes, which had taken a leading role in combating impunity, lost its facilities in the quake and was struggling to regroup. The three-story building that housed the organization collapsed and all of its equipment was destroyed. SOS Journalistes later relocated to a building housing other nonprofit organizations, although it continued to seek new quarters.

For all media, the rebuilding task was enormous, said Delva of SOS Journalistes. In May, the Haitian government approved a US\$5 million package to support and rebuild media in Port-au-Prince. International press groups helped build facilities where local journalists could work, sent support missions, and provided direct assistance. Reporters Without Borders and the printing company Quebecor led the construction of a media operation center in Port-au-Prince that had 20 computers and other facilities for local reporters. CPJ provided direct support to injured reporters and assisted journalists in getting aid from other humanitarian organizations. Further assistance was still needed in late year, Delva told CPJ, but he said the aid should focus on individual journalists. Most media outlets were back in operation, he noted, but many dozens of individuals remained unemployed and in urgent need of assistance.

Honduras

Six journalists were murdered in a seven-week span, with three more slain by year's end, a rash of killings that was made all the more shocking by the government's careless and dismissive response. Inattentive and botched investigative work yielded the arrests of but two suspects in all of the killings, and a judge quickly dismissed charges against them. CPJ found that at least three of the victims were slain in direct relation to their work, and it continued to investigate the other cases in late year.

In the midst of the killing spree, Minister of Security Oscar Álvarez broadly dismissed professional motives. "I guarantee that in all of them there is nothing to indicate that it is because of their journalistic work," he was quoted as saying by the Tegucigalpa newspaper *La Tribuna*. CPJ Representative Mike O'Connor traveled to Honduras soon after to investigate the killings, producing a special report in July that found an alarming climate of impunity in which authorities were unable or unwilling

to investigate the crimes and arrest the perpetrators. In one case, the government ignored a directive from the Organization of American States to provide protection to a journalist under threat—a prominent television anchor who was later gunned down. Although CPJ’s investigation did not reveal a political conspiracy or coordinated efforts behind the murders, it found that the murders occurred in a politically charged atmosphere of violence and lawlessness.

The violence reflected a societal breakdown that followed the June 2009 military-supported coup that ousted leftist President Manuel Zelaya, CPJ found. After five months in which the country was led by an interim government, presidential elections in November 2009 brought the conservative Porfirio “Pepe” Lobo to power. But Lobo encountered significant domestic opposition as he took office in January 2010, with critics decrying his election as the tainted product of an illegal coup. Zelaya supporters, journalists, and other critics reported ongoing repression in 2010, including violent attacks. Numerous journalists told CPJ they felt they could be targets if they were seen as opponents of the government or powerful

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » Rash of journalist murders occurs in lawless, politically charged climate.
- » In murder investigations, authorities inattentive and dismissive.

3 Months between Nahúm Palacios Arteaga’s murder and the time authorities conducted an autopsy.

business figures. Human rights groups defending peasants in land disputes said their leaders had been abducted or killed by government agents or private groups.

A U.S. State Department assessment of human rights in Honduras, published in March 2010, spoke in unusually harsh terms of a country with which America has had friendly relations. Referring to politically motivated murders, it said, “Following the June coup, there were reports that the de facto regime or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.” The report also depicted a bleak landscape for those who might speak out against the regime: “A small number of powerful business magnates with intersecting commercial, political, and family ties owned most of the country’s news media.”

The government’s investigation into the murder of Nahúm Palacios

Arteaga reflected a breakdown in the rule of law, CPJ found. Palacios, 34, a Tocoa television anchor who opposed the 2009 coup, had encountered such severe harassment from the military that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the human rights arm of the Organization of American States, ordered the Honduran government to protect the journalist's life. It was one of more than 400 such orders issued for journalists and activists in Honduras in 2009 and 2010. Although required by international treaty to follow the directives, the Honduran government appeared to ignore most of the protective orders, including the one covering Palacios. By reporting on drug traffickers and taking up the cause of peasants in land disputes, Palacios had made plenty of other enemies, CPJ research showed.

On the night of March 14, gunmen lying in wait at Palacios' home unleashed a fusillade that killed the journalist and a companion. The law enforcement system that should have been providing protection to Palacios then failed to properly investigate his killing. No autopsy was immediately conducted, no crime scene photos were taken, and no forensic evidence was gathered from the scene, authorities acknowledged in interviews with CPJ. Three months after Palacios was buried, investigators exhumed the body and conducted an autopsy at graveside. Prosecutor Arody Reyes told CPJ that the autopsy was suddenly important because the Honduran government had enlisted the help of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Local investigators, Reyes said, needed to show their U.S. counterparts some evidence.

CPJ's investigation also found work-related motives in the murders of David Meza Montesinos and Joseph Hernández Ochoa.

A reporter for broadcaster Radio América and local TV stations, Meza was shot on the doorstep of his home in La Ceiba on March 11. Like Palacios, Meza had specialized in helping people who thought they had been mistreated by the government or businesses, colleagues told CPJ. Not long before he was murdered, the journalist had begun harshly criticizing local police for alleged corruption and incompetence.

Hernández, 25, host of an entertainment and news show on Channel 5, was shot on March 1 as he was driving in Tegucigalpa with Karol Cabrera, one of the country's most provocative journalists. Cabrera, who was seriously injured, said she believed the assailants had targeted her for her pro-government radio commentary. She also told CPJ that she had received a stream of death threats from leftist groups; in June, she and her children moved to Canada.

In its investigation, CPJ spoke with several sources who said Meza and Palacios had each sought money from newsmakers in exchange for

favorable coverage. Those same sources, however, said the practice was not likely at play in the killings. Allegations of extortion involving journalists are not uncommon, CPJ found.

After CPJ's report received widespread media coverage, the Honduran government objected to the findings. In an August letter to *The New York Times*, Human Rights Minister Ana Pineda brushed aside the possibility of journalism-related motives in the killings, all of which had been “fully investigated.” CPJ Senior Program Coordinator Carlos Lauría responded on the CPJ Blog: “Our concern in all of the journalist murders is that Honduran authorities have sought to minimize the climate of impunity in anti-press violence and dismiss the political motives behind such actions. By asserting in her letter to the *Times* that the killings were the product of ‘organized crime and common crime,’ Pineda seems to show that the government is not yet ready to confront the facts.”

Mexico

Organized crime groups exerted fierce pressure on the Mexican press as their control spread across vast regions and nearly every aspect of society. Pervasive self-censorship by news media in areas under drug traffickers' influence was a devastating consequence of violence and intimidation. Ten journalists were killed, at least three in direct relation to their work, and three other reporters disappeared. In addition, journalists were assaulted, kidnapped, or forced into exile, while media outlets were

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Amid rampant violence, Calderón backs federalization of anti-press crimes.
- » More than 30 journalists killed or disappeared since Calderón's term began.

KEY STATISTIC

4 Journalists abducted in Durango by gangsters who demand that TV stations air their propaganda.

targeted by bomb attacks, making Mexico one of the world's deadliest places for the press. After meeting with a CPJ delegation, President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa pledged to push for legislation making attacks on free expression a federal crime, and announced the launch of a security program for at-risk reporters.

The activities of criminal groups burst further into the public's attention with new cartel warfare in states such as Nuevo León, Nayarit, Durango, and Tamaulipas. Since President Calderón launched a massive military offensive against the powerful drug cartels after taking office in December 2006, almost 30,000 people have died in drug-related crimes, the attorney general's office said.

One of the worst places was Ciudad Juárez, a major city on the border with Texas, where the federal government had sworn it would set an example in retaking the country. Despite deploying as many as 10,000 soldiers and federal police, the government could not wrest control of the city from organized crime groups. A September editorial in the main local paper, *El Diario*, which had lost two journalists to drug violence since 2008, put the situation in stark terms when it addressed the two cartels in the city: "You are, at this time, the de facto authorities." Given that, the editorial asked, what will the cartels allow the paper to publish? The editorial was published a day after *El Diario* photographer Luis Carlos Santiago, 21, was fatally shot in a shopping mall parking lot. The federal government did not respond to the editorial's charge that cartels controlled the city, saying instead that the paper was irresponsible in its published offer.

Aside from the continuing slaughter that drew international attention to Ciudad Juárez, furious gun battles between cartels went on for months in cities to the east, in the state of Tamaulipas, also on the Texas border. But the cartels ordered that none of the fighting be covered by the local press, and so it was not, despite the danger of civilians being caught in the crossfire. But that was only one effect of the control over the press. Many reporters in the state's largest city, Reynosa, told CPJ that organized crime had effectively taken over the police and many municipal functions, but they dared not report it and the public did not know it had lost the city. Unlike Ciudad Juárez, with its dreadful murder rate, most of the state of Tamaulipas had been fairly quiet until 2010 when the cartel war broke out.

In September, CPJ issued a special report, *Silence or Death in Mexico's Press*, which revealed how drug violence and corruption had devastated the news media and stripped citizens of their rights to freedom of expression and access to information. The report described how fear and self-censorship had destroyed the ability of the press to report the news while placing Mexico's future as a democracy at risk.

More than 30 journalists have been killed or have disappeared in Mexico since Calderón's term began in December 2006, CPJ found, a number that rivals war-wracked countries such as Iraq and Somalia. These crimes remained almost entirely unsolved, not only as a result of negligence and incompetence but of widespread corruption among

law enforcement officials, particularly at the state level. The report found that some journalists, too, had become tools of criminal groups by taking money to write cartel propaganda. It blamed a weak, corrupt, and overburdened justice system for failing to investigate crimes against journalists, thus encouraging further crimes. The report concluded that the national crisis demanded a forceful response from the federal government.

Two weeks after the report was published, a joint delegation from CPJ and the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) met with the Mexican president. After a 90-minute discussion, Calderón pledged to push for legislation that would make attacks on journalists a federal crime, and establish accountability at senior levels of the national government. Calling the right to free expression a priority of his administration, the president said federal authorities would implement a program to provide security to at-risk journalists, modeled after a successful effort in Colombia. He said federal forces were working to improve human rights training, and he pledged receptiveness to journalists' concerns about human rights violations by law enforcement.

CPJ and IAPA have long advocated federal intervention to address the crisis. The meeting, in the presidential office in Los Pinos, included Attorney General Arturo Chávez Chávez and Minister of Interior José Francisco Blake Mora. The CPJ delegation was led by Executive Director Joel Simon, and included board member María Teresa Ronderos, Senior Program Coordinator Carlos Lauría, and Mexico representative Mike O'Connor. The IAPA delegation, led by Vice President Gonzalo Marroquín, included Executive Director Julio Muñoz and Press Institute Director Ricardo Trotti.

Calderón also announced the arrest of a suspect in the 2008 murder of prominent Ciudad Juárez reporter Armando Rodríguez Carreón. A veteran crime reporter for *El Diario*, Rodríguez was shot in front of his young daughter in November 2008. Since then, the investigation has stalled and his newspaper has campaigned intensively for justice. Attorney General Chávez said that the suspect and his accomplices had been motivated by Rodríguez's coverage of drug trafficking. But a day after the president's announcement, *El Diario* reported that the suspect, Juan Soto Arias, had been tortured and coerced to confess to the journalist's slaying. Mexican authorities did not comment on the *El Diario* report, which was based on unnamed sources.

By late year, the administration moved forward on its broad pledges to protect the press. In November, the Ministry of Interior announced details of a program to provide at-risk journalists with a range of protective measures, including bodyguards, armored cars, and relocation assistance. Yet some journalists and press groups were dissatisfied with

the announcement, saying the plan was designed entirely by government officials without sufficient understanding of front-line journalism. The government, these journalists said, will have to overcome deep mistrust among the press corps as it moves ahead with the protection program. In October, the Justice Committee of the Chamber of Deputies backed a constitutional amendment to give federal authorities broad authority to investigate and prosecute crimes against free expression. The proposal, similar to a 2008 plan that ultimately died, was moved to the chamber's floor for a vote.

Earlier in the year, the federal government had taken some other steps to fight impunity. In July, the office of the federal special prosecutor for crimes against journalists was given broader authority and new responsibilities. Under the new mandate, the prosecutor reported directly to the attorney general and was responsible for investigating crimes against freedom of expression. The administration also named Gustavo Salas Chávez, a former Mexico City prosecutor, as the special prosecutor, replacing Octavio Orellana Wiarco, whose tenure was marked by a decided lack of progress in addressing anti-press violence. The office is potentially important because it can take on cases that have languished in the hands of state officials, CPJ research shows.

Amid a war between the Gulf cartel and the Zetas criminal group in the city of Reynosa, reporters Miguel Angel Domínguez, Pedro Argüello, and David Silva, all of the El Mañana newspaper group, went missing in early March. Silva reappeared months later, according to reports from several journalists, although the circumstances of his disappearance remained unclear. The other journalists remained missing in late year. Ramón Ángeles Zalpa, a stringer for *Cambio de Michoacán*, in the state of Michoacán, was reported missing on April 6. His son told CPJ that he left for work at the local university, where he was an instructor, but never arrived. Another stringer for the same paper, María Esther Casimbe, vanished in November 2009.

Drug traffickers took new and unprecedented steps in their battle to control information and influence news coverage. For years, they had enforced censorship on news organizations, bribed or threatened individual reporters to write stories favorable to them, and, in some cases, threatened media into slanting coverage. But in 2010, they went further: They forced the press to give the public pure propaganda.

After abducting four journalists in the state of Durango, drug traffickers said the men would not be released unless certain videos were aired by a local television station owned by Televisa and a local affiliate for Milenio. The videos, which the stations agreed to broadcast, seemed to contain confessions of people in captivity accusing rival gangsters of corrupting

local police and officials. Two captives were released. The government said federal police rescued the two other hostages, but one captive said the traffickers simply allowed them to go free, sparking speculation that the rescue was staged. This was the first documented case in Mexico in which journalists were taken hostage to force news organizations to broadcast a criminal group's propaganda, CPJ research found. In September, one of the abducted reporters, Televisa cameraman Alejandro Hernández Pacheco, requested political asylum in the United States. The reporter said he felt vulnerable in Mexico, particularly after officials presented the captives at a news conference and declared the Sinaloa drug cartel responsible.

Also in September, a judge in El Paso, Texas, granted political asylum to Mexican journalist Jorge Luis Aguirre, editor of the news website *La Polaka*. Aguirre had fled Ciudad Juárez in November 2008 after receiving a death threat on the same day that local crime reporter Armando Rodríguez Carreón was murdered. It was the first time in recent years that the United States granted political asylum to a reporter, local and international news accounts said, a tacit acknowledgment that Mexico has become an extremely dangerous place for the press.

The Canadian government granted political asylum in June to Luis Horacio Nájera, former Ciudad Juárez correspondent for the Reforma Group. Nájera and his family relocated to Vancouver after receiving death threats in 2008 from drug traffickers, military officials, and police. "Threats came from all sides," Nájera wrote in a first-person piece published as part of CPJ's special report, *Silence or Death in Mexico's Press*. "In the crossfire, I had no one to turn to for help. Having seen the pervasive climate of violent crime and impunity, I could not trust the government and I could not simply let myself be killed under some lonely streetlight."

In Ciudad Victoria, state capital of Tamaulipas, the Zetas criminal group formed a public relations arm that e-mailed press releases, complete with photos, to local newspapers, which ran the propaganda out of fear, according to local editors. The press releases were cast as "stories" that showed the army in a bad light. Other press releases praised the local police, which some journalists said were in collusion with the cartel.

In regions where drug traffickers battled for territorial control, media outlets were targets of bomb attacks. In late August, a car bomb exploded at Televisa's headquarters in Ciudad Victoria. There were no injuries, the network said, but its transmission was knocked out for several hours and there was damage to neighboring buildings. Earlier that month, a hand grenade was thrown at the Televisa offices in Monterrey in northern Mexico, while unidentified assailants fired a homemade explosive device at the Televisa offices in Matamoros, Tamaulipas state, news reports said. No injuries were reported.

Journalists reported numerous instances of harassment and assault by federal police and military forces, who often insisted that their actions should not be covered. Reporters and photographers in the states of Michoacán, Sinaloa, and Chihuahua, where the army was widely deployed, said they were often threatened by soldiers during news events. Sometimes, they said, soldiers detained or hit them, and damaged their gear or erased their photographs. Statements from the army often ascribed this treatment to new recruits not yet properly trained. Still, at least five journalists said they were detained and beaten by members of President Calderón's personal military guard outside of the hotel where he was to speak in Ciudad Juárez in February, according to news reports. In its meeting with the president in September, the CPJ-IAPA delegation expressed concern that military forces and federal police officers were abusing the press.

In May, a video camera operator, a still photographer, and a driver for the online newsmagazine *Reporte Indigo* were detained while working in front of the home of Genaro García Luna, head of the national Secretariat of Public Security. The magazine had been publishing a series of stories questioning how García could afford to buy the house. The three journalists were held for 20 hours, then released without charge, according to the Center for Journalism and Public Ethics, a Mexican press freedom group. In a June letter to President Calderón, CPJ called on the government to develop new procedures and training to ensure that soldiers and federal police did not obstruct the press.

In February, the only man charged in the killing of U.S. freelance journalist Bradley Will was exonerated by a judge. Will was killed in 2006 while covering protests in the southern state of Oaxaca. The man, Juan Manuel Martínez, was said to be a scapegoat by Will's family and human rights groups, which pointed to gunmen working for the state governor as being responsible for the murder.

United States

In two important advances, Congress passed legislation to track press freedom worldwide while military forces released an Iraqi journalist who had been held without charge for 17 months. But officials obstructed a photojournalist covering the massive oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and reporters documenting military judicial proceedings at Guantánamo Bay, in Cuba. A U.S. military video, disclosed by the website WikiLeaks, raised questions as to whether U.S. troops acted properly when they shot and killed an Iraqi journalist and his assistant in 2007.

On February 10, U.S. military forces released Ibrahim Jassam, a freelance photographer and cameraman who contributed to Reuters. After arresting Jassam in September 2008 on the vague assertion that he posed “a threat to the security of Iraq and coalition forces,” the U.S. military went on to hold him in defiance of an Iraqi Central Criminal Court ruling that concluded there was no evidence to charge the journalist with a crime. CPJ and others expressed hope that Jassam’s release would mark the end of an alarming U.S. military practice of holding journalists in open-ended detentions. Beginning in 2004, at least 14 journalists were held by U.S. forces for prolonged periods without charge or due process in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo Bay, CPJ research showed.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » U.S. military ignores call for probe into killings of 16 journalists in Iraq.
- » Under Pearl Act, State Department will track press freedom worldwide.

14

Journalists imprisoned by U.S. military forces for prolonged periods without charge between 2004 and 2010.

In May, President Barack Obama signed the Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act, named in memory of the *Wall Street Journal* reporter who was slain in Pakistan in 2003. The measure requires the State Department to expand its reporting on press freedom issues and present its findings on an annual basis to Congress. The reports must document a range of abuses—including attacks, imprisonments, and indirect sources of pressure—and evaluate steps to curb the violations. The same month, Obama marked World Press Freedom Day by remembering journalist Chauncey Bailey, who was murdered in 2007 in Oakland, Calif. A coalition of local journalists and news outlets called the Chauncey Bailey Project was instrumental in exposing a flawed police investigation and sparking a more thorough probe. Prosecutors were preparing the case for trial in late year.

Also in May, Pentagon officials barred four journalists from covering U.S. military commission proceedings in Guantánamo Bay. The military accused the journalists of violating ground rules that barred the identification of its personnel without explicit approval. Michelle Shephard of the *Toronto Star*, Paul Koring of *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Steven Edwards of Canwest News Service, and Carol Rosenberg of *The Miami Herald* each named a U.S. Army interrogator, Joshua Claus, whom a detainee under examination had accused of torture. Claus had already identified

himself to the press two years earlier in interviews with the *Toronto Star* and other Canadian media in which he denied torturing the detainee. His name had also appeared in a 2005 *New York Times* story about a separate U.S. military interrogation case.

A coalition of news organizations, including McClatchy Newspapers (owner of *The Miami Herald*), Dow Jones & Co., *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Reuters, and The Associated Press charged that the ban was unconstitutional. Two months after the reporters were barred, the Pentagon allowed them to return to the proceedings on the condition that they admit to violating military rules and agree to abide by Pentagon restrictions in subsequent stories. In September, the Pentagon issued new ground rules allowing reporters to publish already-public information even if it was declared “protected” by a military judge in Guantánamo Bay. The Pentagon said it would continue to impose other restrictions—including cropping photographs before publication to meet security requirements—although it established an expedited appeal process so disputes could be resolved within 24 hours.

At least one journalist was harassed while trying to cover the Gulf oil spill, one of the biggest U.S. stories of 2010. Photographer Lance Rosenfield was on assignment in July for the nonprofit media outlet ProPublica (headed by CPJ Chairman Paul Steiger) and the PBS television program “Frontline” near a BP refinery in Texas City, Texas. Rosenfield was confronted by a BP security officer, local police, and a man who identified himself as an agent of the Department of Homeland Security, according to ProPublica. Police released the photographer only after reviewing his images and recording his date of birth and Social Security number. The police officer then turned the information over to the BP security guard, ProPublica said.

In Alaska, campaign aides for Republican U.S. Senate candidate Joe Miller handcuffed and detained a local website editor in October after he persisted in asking questions after a town hall-style campaign event. *Alaska Dispatch* founder and editor Tony Hopfinger was questioning Miller about reports that the candidate had been disciplined for using Fairbanks city resources for his own political campaigns while employed as a part-time borough attorney. When police arrived, they set the editor free. No charges were filed against anyone involved. Miller lost the election.

In April, WikiLeaks disclosed a U.S. military video showing a July 2007 attack by U.S. forces in Baghdad that resulted in the deaths of several people, among them Reuters photographer Namir Noor-Eldeen and his assistant, Saeed Chmagh. CPJ sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Defense

Robert Gates, calling for a comprehensive, impartial, and public inquiry into the killings of Noor-Eldeen and Chmagh, along with 15 other Iraqi journalists and two media support workers killed by U.S. forces' fire since 2003. Gates did not respond.

Pentagon officials were the ones protesting in July when WikiLeaks posted more than 75,000 classified U.S. military documents about Afghanistan. The website provided *The New York Times*, the *Guardian*, and *Der Spiegel* early access to the documents, and each publication summarized their findings in separate stories published simultaneously in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany. In October, WikiLeaks released nearly 400,000 classified U.S. military documents about operations in Iraq. The Pentagon again protested, saying the disclosure threatened the lives of U.S. and allied troops and their informants.

The next month, WikiLeaks disclosed a trove of confidential U.S. State Department communiqués, prompting some American political figures to condemn founder Julian Assange as an “enemy combatant” and “information terrorist.” CPJ said the use of such inflammatory rhetoric gives cover to autocratic leaders around the world who routinely use similar language to refer to critical journalists. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said he would pursue legal action against Assange. Details of a potential prosecution were not disclosed, although there was speculation the government could pursue charges under the 1917 Espionage Act. In a letter to Obama and Holder, CPJ urged the administration not to prosecute Assange.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the State Department denied an entry visa in June to Hollman Morris, an award-winning Colombian journalist who was to study at Harvard University on a Nieman Fellowship. The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá informed the journalist that he was ineligible under the Patriot Act, which bars visas to those accused of terrorist activities. Nieman Curator Robert H. Giles noted in the *Los Angeles Times* that while some previous fellows had been blocked by their own governments—such as apartheid-era South Africa—the denial of Morris' visa was the first time a Nieman Fellow was barred by the United States.

Morris was known for his groundbreaking exposés of human rights abuses and links between illegal right-wing paramilitary groups and officials in the government of President Álvaro Uribe Vélez. Uribe's unfounded characterization of Morris as “an accomplice of terrorism” was widely seen as influencing the U.S. decision. A coalition of groups that included CPJ, Human Rights Watch, the Dart Center for Journalism & Trauma, the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, and the American Civil Liberties Union protested the decision. CPJ sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton asking her to reverse the ruling. A month later,

U.S. officials granted Morris a visa.

In May, a federal court in New York ruled in favor of an oil company seeking to obtain unedited footage taken for the documentary “Crude.” The film documented allegations of health and environmental degradation caused by Texaco’s Ecuadoran oil extraction. The oil company, owned by Chevron in 2010, said it needed the footage for its defense in a lawsuit filed by Ecuadorans seeking millions of dollars in damages. The filmmaker Joseph Berlinger filed an appeal. A group of documentary filmmakers and film production associations, including the International Documentary Association, the Directors Guild of America, and the Tribeca Film Institute, filed a statement in his support. News organizations, including the AP and *The New York Times*, filed a supporting brief written by famed First Amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams. In July, the U.S. Court of Appeals in New York narrowed the ruling but still ordered Berlinger to turn over a limited amount of raw footage involving lawyers, experts, and government officials. In September, the trial court ordered Berlinger to answer questions in a deposition with Chevron lawyers.

Molly Norris, a political cartoonist for the *Seattle Weekly*, went into hiding after she issued a tongue-in-cheek call for an “Everybody Draw Muhammad Day,” according to the newspaper. The declaration was included in an April cartoon lampooning the cable network Comedy Central’s decision not to broadcast an episode of “South Park” that tested the Islamic prohibition on depicting images of the Prophet. Norris’ cartoon did not directly depict Muhammad, but it included images such as a smiling teapot saying, “I am the real likeness of Muhammad.” The cartoon was reposted by third parties on Facebook. A Pakistani court ordered service providers to temporarily block access to Facebook over the cartoon. A Yemeni-American cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki, declared in an English-language magazine, *Inspire*, excerpts of which were later posted online by the website “Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,” that Norris “does not deserve life, does not deserve to breathe the air,” according to the New York *Daily News*. Norris went into hiding in September on the advice of FBI experts, the *Seattle Weekly* reported.

Venezuela

Using all the tools of power, President Hugo Chávez Frías continued his aggressive campaign to silence critical news media. In the waning days of a lame-duck National Assembly, the Chávez administration pushed through measures to restrict Internet content and tighten control over

broadcast licenses. Relying on politicized courts, the government barred two major newspapers from publishing images of crime and violence in the run-up to September legislative elections. And through a series of politically motivated regulatory actions, the administration intimidated one critical broadcaster, Globovisión, and banished another, RCTV International.

The National Telecommunications Commission, ruling that RCTV International had violated a requirement to air presidential addresses, ordered cable and satellite operators in January to stop carrying the station. Under the Law on Social Responsibility on Radio and Television, which has been widely criticized for its broad restrictions on free expression, all national broadcasters must carry government programming when ordered, including live broadcasts of Chávez's addresses, known as *cadenas*. RCTV International had argued that it was not a national station as defined under the law and was thus exempt from the requirement. The network remained off cable and satellite subscription services in late year.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Censorship spikes: RCTV banished again, newspapers barred from using crime images.
- » New laws restrict Internet content, tighten control over broadcast licenses.

KEY STATISTIC

1,300

Hours of presidential speeches that were aired between 1999 and 2010.

RCTV International began operating as a paid subscription channel after the government pulled the original station, known simply as RCTV, from the public airwaves in mid-2007. The country's oldest broadcaster, RCTV was also one of Chávez's harshest critics. In the RCTV cases and numerous others, CPJ found a regulatory process in which decisions were predetermined and politically motivated. In 2009, regulators removed dozens of critical radio stations from the public airwaves, according to CPJ research. The threat of losing broadcast licenses has made other television and radio stations pull back on critical programming.

Chávez has regularly used *cadenas* to attack the private media and amplify the government's voice. From 1999, when he first took office, until January 2010, Chávez delivered nearly 2,000 *cadenas*, accounting for more than 1,300 broadcast hours, or the equivalent of 54 full days, according to research by AGB Nielsen. Chávez also used a weekly call-in program, "Aló, Presidente," aired on state radio and television, to lambaste news

media and opposition critics. He stepped up his exposure in February, launching a new radio program called “De repente con Chávez” (Suddenly, With Chávez). The show, which aired on state-owned Radio Nacional de Venezuela, did not keep a regular schedule, instead broadcasting when the president had a sudden need to speak.

In August, a court that normally handles juvenile matters barred local media from publishing images of crime in the run-up to legislative elections. The case began when the Caracas daily *El Nacional* published an archival photo of corpses piling up in a local morgue to illustrate an August 13 front-page report on rising crime. Soon after Chávez called the image “pornographic,” the court ruled that *El Nacional* could not publish “images, information, and publicity of any type that contains blood, guns, alarming messages, or physical aggression.” The court’s order said that such material could harm children and teenagers. In a show of solidarity, the critical daily *Tal Cual* reprinted the morgue photograph on August 16, sparking a second, broader ruling. This time, the court barred all Venezuelan print media from publishing violent images for one month.

After domestic and international condemnation, the court lifted the media-wide ban two days later and allowed *El Nacional* to resume print coverage of violence. But photo prohibitions remained in place against *El Nacional* and *Tal Cual* in late year.

CPJ and numerous others said the case reflected administration efforts to quash news coverage of crime, which was among the public’s top concerns in the weeks leading up to the September election. “The crime rate has become a critical issue for the government,” said Miguel Otero, editor of *El Nacional*. “These rulings were a very convenient way to stop crime stories from going public.” In this case, however, the government’s efforts to control news coverage may have backfired: News media aggressively covered the crime issue in the aftermath of the court order, said Ewald Scharfenberg, executive director of the local press group IPYS Venezuela. Chávez’s ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela won the most seats in the legislative elections, but it lost the two-thirds supermajority allowing for quick passage of its measures.

Anticipating a less compliant National Assembly in 2011, the administration pushed a set of repressive measures through the legislature during a lame-duck session in December. The assembly, acting with little debate, adopted measures that extended the restrictive social responsibility law to the Internet, granted broadcast regulators tighter control over licensing, and barred press freedom and other nongovernmental organizations from receiving foreign support. Press freedom advocates decried the changes, which prohibit online media from publishing material that “foments citizens’ anxiety,” “alters public order” or “disrespects authorities.” Broadcast

licenses were shortened from 20 years to 15 years, and regulators were granted authority to revoke a license based on a sole violation. The assembly also gave Chávez the power to rule by decree for 18 months.

Two critical journalists were targeted in criminal prosecutions. In June, a court in Carabobo state fined Francisco Pérez, a columnist with the daily *El Carabobeño*, 94,000 bolivares (US\$21,000) on criminal defamation charges. He was also barred from working as a journalist for three years and nine months, *El Carabobeño* reported. The charges stemmed from 2009 columns in which Pérez accused Valencia Mayor Edgardo Parra of appointing relatives to political positions. In November, an appeals court tossed out the conviction.

Journalist Gustavo Azócar, a harsh government critic, was found guilty of fraud in March concerning the handling of a 2000 advertising contract between the state lottery and Radio Noticias 1060, a private station that employed the journalist at the time, according to press reports. Judge José Hernán Oliveros imposed a prison term of two and a half years, but freed Azócar on parole. (The journalist had been in custody since July 2009.) CPJ research showed the criminal prosecution of Azócar was trumped up to retaliate for his critical commentary. Azócar, active in Venezuela's opposition movement, won a deputy's seat in the September election. He also appealed the conviction.

Guillermo Zuloaga, president of the private television network Globovisión, was arrested in late March after being accused of spreading false news and offending Chávez in remarks to the Inter American Press Association, the regional publishers group. Zuloaga was released a few hours later, a development Chávez decried. On June 11, authorities issued an arrest warrant for Zuloaga and his son on charges of conspiracy and unlawful lending. Zuloaga, who owns a number of car dealerships, denied wrongdoing and said the charges had been fabricated as a way to close the station. He fled to the United States and filed a request for political asylum.

Regulators continued to harass Globovisión, opening several administrative investigations that accused the network of "inciting rebellion" and creating "panic and anxiety in the population." A sanction in any one case could lead to the station's suspension for up to 72 hours; a second sanction could result in the revocation of its broadcast license. Globovisión was the target of attack in August 2009, when a group of armed assailants on motorcycles stormed its Caracas offices and set off tear gas canisters, injuring a police officer and two employees.

In December, the Chávez administration announced it was acquiring a 20 percent stake in Globovisión. The acquisition was part of a government takeover of Banco Federal, whose president had controlled a minority

stake in Globovisión. The OAS special rapporteur on freedom of expression immediately called on Venezuela to ensure that Globovisión can cover the news without government interference. The government said it had the right to name a member to the Globovisión board of directors.

Authorities took an important step forward in combating impunity in anti-press violence. In August, Colombian authorities acting on a Venezuelan warrant arrested businessman Walid Makled García in the border city of Cúcuta, according to news reports. Venezuelan authorities had accused Makled of plotting the 2009 murder of Orel Sambrano, director of Radio América and the weekly *ABC de la Semana*, in reprisal for coverage linking the businessman's brother to drug traffickers. Makled denied any connection to the slaying in a letter to Venezuelan media. In November, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos announced that Makled would be extradited to Venezuela, although the process could take months. In May, a court in Carabobo state sentenced a former police sergeant to 25 years in prison on conspiracy charges related to the Sambrano murder, according to news accounts.

In November, CPJ presented an International Press Freedom Award to Laureano Márquez, the prominent journalist, author, actor, and humorist. Márquez, known for his biting columns in the Caracas daily *Tal Cual* and other national publications, is also the author of three books of humor, including the 2004 national bestseller, *Código Bochinche*. In January, Márquez wrote an opinion piece in *Tal Cual* that imagined Venezuela freed from the political oppression of a ruler named "Esteban," a veiled reference to Chávez. Information Minister Blanca Eekhout demanded the journalist be criminally prosecuted, describing the column as an assault on the country's democracy. No charges were filed against the journalist.

"A new form of authoritarianism is taking hold in the world that uses democratic methods to put an end to democracy," Márquez said in accepting the CPJ award. "In such models, those in power need people to fear expressing dissenting views. In the midst of this silence, governments go about the business of dismantling democratic institutions. The Venezuelan experience has shown me that it is essential for all citizens to be aware of the importance of free expression and, moreover, that this is not merely a concern for journalists and media workers, but for all citizens."

Attacks and developments throughout the region

Bolivia

- » In October, President Evo Morales signed a measure named the Law Against Racism and All Other Forms of Discrimination. Under Article 16 of the law, “any media outlet that endorses or publishes racist or discriminatory ideas will be liable to economic sanctions and the suspension of its operating license.” Article 23 stipulates that individual journalists and media owners seen as spreading such ideas face a prison sentence of one to five years and “will not be able to claim immunity or any other privilege.” CPJ sent a letter to the president expressing concern that vague language in the two articles could be used to punish legitimate journalism and may promote self-censorship in the press.

Canada

- » Canadian authorities interrogated, beat, and denied entry to journalists intending to cover the Olympic Games and the G-20 summit of world leaders. Police struck Jesse Rosenfeld, a contributor to London’s *Guardian* newspaper, in the stomach and back as they forced him to the ground in Toronto where he was covering a demonstration related to the G-20 summit. John Weston Osburn, a Salt Lake City freelance journalist with the U.S. news organization Indymedia, was interrogated and denied entry by Canadian border authorities on February 9 due to a past U.S. conviction for a misdemeanor, according to news reports. He was on his way to cover protests related to the Olympic Games. A second journalist, Martin Macias Jr., a contributor to the online news outlet *Vocalo*, was detained and questioned for two hours on February 6, before being turned away and put on a plane to Seattle, according to *The Huffington Post*. Macias was planning to attend a press conference by the Olympic Resistance Network, a group critical of the games.

Chile

- » Chilean police arrested freelance reporter Marcelo Garay Vergara in Santiago on September 11 as he left his house for an assignment, news reports said. Officers alleged that Garay did not comply with a court summons issued in a pending criminal case. The journalist told local

reporters that he was never notified of the summons. In 2009, he was accused under the Chilean Penal Code of taking pictures on private property to illustrate an investigative report on the long-standing conflict between the Chilean government and the Mapuche, the country's largest indigenous group, according to news accounts. The journalist was reportedly released a day after the arrest.

Costa Rica

- » The Supreme Court struck down prison terms for defamation in a landmark decision made public in February 2010. The court issued the ruling in a case against José Luis Jiménez Robleto, a reporter with the San José-daily *Diario Extra*, who was charged with defamation after publishing a news story on alleged embezzlement. The journalist was sentenced in March 2004 to 50 days in prison based on the anachronistic 1902 press law. His conviction was overturned by the Supreme Court.

El Salvador

- » In September, the Supreme Court struck down a portion of the Salvadoran Penal Code that exempted news outlets and journalists from criminal sanctions in defamation cases involving government officials. The Organization of American States' special rapporteur for freedom of expression raised concerns over the court's decision, saying the provisions were an important protection for freedom of expression.

Guatemala

- » Two unidentified assailants threatened investigative reporter Marvin del Cid Acevedo and stole two computers from his home, the journalist told CPJ. The assailants broke into del Cid's home around 10:30 a.m. on June 25, stole the equipment, and left a message written on a mirror saying, "You will die." Shortly before the attack, he had received several anonymous phone calls that aggressively questioned his reporting, he said. An investigative reporter for Guatemalan newspaper *elPeriódico*, del Cid had recently written about a local official, accusing him of involvement in human trafficking and influence-peddling. In another attack on September 28, unidentified individuals broke into the journalist's home, stealing his computer and files related to his investigations, *elPeriódico* reported. The second attack took place shortly after del Cid had investigated stories on drug trafficking and government corruption, the paper said.

Panama

- » Veteran journalist Carlos Núñez López was jailed on June 26 on a 2008 defamation conviction. The charges against him stemmed from a 2005 story in the now-defunct newspaper *La Crónica* about environmental damage in the province of Bocas del Toro. A landowner alleged that his reputation had been damaged by the article. A court of appeals upheld a one-year prison term in 2008, but the journalist was never notified by his lawyers at the time, according to his current counsel, Luis Ferreyra. A court in Panama City turned the prison term into a nominal fine and released Núñez on July 14, the Panamanian daily *La Prensa* reported.
- » An appeals court convicted two TV journalists of criminal defamation and banned them from professional work for one year. The case stemmed from a 2005 story, aired by the national broadcaster TVN Canal 2, alleging that Panamanian immigration officials took part in human trafficking. Two officials named in the article filed charges against Sabrina Bacal, the station's news director, and Justino González, the reporter on the story. In separate rulings early in the year, two lower courts dismissed the charges against the reporters, Bacal told CPJ. The appeals court also ordered them to pay a US\$3,650 fine or be subjected to a one-year suspended prison term. Soon after the ruling was made public on October 4, President Ricardo Martinelli offered both reporters a full pardon, according to a government statement. The pardon went into effect on October 7.

Paraguay

- » Gabriel Bustamante, correspondent for the daily *La Nación* and a reporter with local radio FM Ayolas, was assaulted and beaten by a local official's brothers, who demanded that he stop reporting on their relative, the reporter told CPJ. An individual identified as Francisco Vera broke into FM Ayolas on July 22 as the journalist was hosting his daily news show. The prosecutor's office issued an arrest warrant for Vera, who was believed to have left the country after the attack, Bustamante said. Two days later, an armed individual identified as Valentín Vera threatened the journalist. Vera was reportedly arrested later that day. Both the gunman and the first attacker were brothers of Isidro Vera, an official at the government-owned power station Yaciretá. Bustamante had aired harsh critiques of Vera's office before the attack.

Peru

- » Alejandro Carrascal Carrasco, editor of the Bagua-based newspaper *Nor Oriente*, was jailed on January 12 after a court in Utcubamba province sentenced him to one year in prison on defamation charges. Carrascal wrote a series of articles in 2005 alleging corruption in a local public school. Victor Feria, former director of the school, filed a defamation suit against the journalist, according to local news reports. On June 18, Peru's Supreme Court overturned the Utcubamba court's decision and freed the journalist.

- » A judge in San Lorenzo sentenced radio journalist Oswaldo Pereyra Moreno on June 9 to one year in prison on criminal defamation charges. Pereyra, a host for San Lorenzo-based Radio Macarena, broadcast a report in 2009 about an abortion allegedly given to an unnamed 14-year-old girl in a local pharmacy. The girl's stepfather, who was named on the show, filed a complaint against the reporter, alleging that his reputation had been damaged. A court of appeals voided the lower court's decision on procedural grounds and released Pereyra on July 7. Charges remained intact, however, and the case was pending in late year.



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Asia

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In Sri Lanka and Thailand, politicians fomented media polarization and then exploited the environment to justify restrictions on all news outlets.
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PHOTO CREDITS

Section break: Troops prevent a photographer from covering a bomb blast in Kabul. (Reuters/Shamil Zhumatov) Analysis: With journalists in their midst, police and protesters clash in Bangkok. (Reuters/Chaiwat Subprasom)

Partisan Journalism And the Cycle of Repression

by Bob Dietz and Shawn W. Crispin

La Wickramatunga's family and publishing house, Leader Publications, have paid dearly in Sri Lanka's highly charged political climate. While Leader's newspapers, including the weekly *Sunday Leader*, are widely known for tough, independent reporting, they have been caught up in a partisan media environment, one filled with violence and censorship. Wickramatunga's brother has been murdered, his company has been sued, and his journalists face intimidation.

"The media in Sri Lanka are largely partisan," says Wickramatunga, who traces the evolution of the country's press, in part, to a history of government manipulation and repression. Now, President Mahinda Rajapaksa's government is exploiting the situation, citing partisan news coverage as justification for imposing sweeping restrictions. "The media have simply buckled down in the last year," says Wickramatunga, "and are toeing the government line or simply censoring themselves."

What happens when politics gets hot and heavy, and the news media openly pick sides? Those conditions have been exposed in the raw in Sri Lanka and Thailand, where politicians have fomented polarization in the media, used state or partisan outlets to advance their own agendas, and then exploited the environment to justify restrictions on all media, including critical independent outlets.

Both nations share characteristics that have helped create partisan media. They each have strong state media operations that aggressively promote the current administration's views, and they each have a long history of repressing critical independent media. In Thailand, the presence of powerful, moneyed political figures willing to bankroll their own media operations has further fueled this partisan climate. In Sri Lanka, the manipulation of public advertising to reward allies and punish critics has had the effect of marginalizing independent media. In this environment, some

outlets have gone beyond partisanship to become media arms of political operations. At the same time, the government and its supporters have come to equate all criticism with political opposition.

In Sri Lanka, three decades of brutal internal warring with Tamil separatists ended in 2009, only to be followed by a political battle *royale* between Rajapaksa, the president who led the country to victory, and Sarath Fonseka, the general who won the war on the battlefield. In the January 2010 presidential elections, with the fighting well over, nearly all Sri Lankan journalists and their media outlets lined up behind one candidate or the other. Journalists fought their candidate's political battles and sometimes each other, denouncing colleagues by name.

Thailand's exiled former prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, used satellite television and the Internet to combat the government's domination of broadcast media, present his movement's political agenda, and stir massive political unrest. Programming, sometimes incendiary, was aired live from

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*The fallout for the press was significant in
Sri Lanka and Thailand.*

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a stage erected in the center of Bangkok by protesters with the Thaksin-aligned United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship, or UDD, an anti-government protest group. Ninety-one people were killed, including two foreign journalists, and 1,800 were injured in the violence between government troops and armed protesters in April and May.

The fallout for the press was significant in both countries. Individual journalists were targeted with violence and imprisonment, which led to wider self-censorship. The Thai government disingenuously used the cover of emergency rule and media "reform" to close thousands of politically oriented websites. Sri Lanka began imposing a system to restrict election coverage and hold tight rein on media licensing. In both countries, the work of press freedom defenders was complicated as some media blurred the lines between journalism and political operations.

The presence of partisan media is hardly unique in the region. In India, a multiplicity of views has enabled partisan media to thrive, although individual reporters have been attacked. Bangladeshi journalists have also been assaulted on a partisan basis, but violence has ebbed in recent years as the split between the two ruling families has simmered. Pakistan's historically partisan print media have been bolstered by the expansion of broadcast media, which have added to the range of views.

The Philippines boasts a vibrant independent press, but it also offers a lesson in partisanship. The advent of “block time” broadcasting, in which commentators lease time from private radio stations, has enabled local politicians and their surrogates to air harsh political programming aimed at attacking opponents. Numerous block time commentators have been killed in retaliation, CPJ research showed.

In politics and media, polarization is deeply entrenched in Sri Lanka. Rajapaksa not only won the presidency, but his Sri Lanka Freedom Party, in a coalition called the United People’s Freedom Alliance, took a large majority in April’s parliamentary elections. As for Fonseka, in September a military court convicted him of politicized fraud charges. He was stripped of his rank and sentenced to 30 months in prison with hard labor.

Prabath Sahabandu, editor of *The Island* daily, told CPJ that his paper’s pro-Rajapaksa stance was a natural fit: “This government was preoccupied with the war effort and we were also campaigning against terrorism as a newspaper. On this particular issue, we saw eye to eye. So we didn’t have the problems that other newspapers had.” *The Island* is allied with the winning side now, but Sahabandu said it hadn’t always been that way. He said a series of administrations going back to the 1970s had harassed the paper, including pressuring its creditors and printers. “So we have had problems with the government in the past, too,” he said.



In this partisan climate, all news outlets that criticize the government—including Wickramatunga’s more independent publications—are seen as political enemies. And they have faced the harshest of reprisals. On a weekday morning in January 2009, eight men on four motorcycles attacked Wickramatunga’s brother, Lasantha, editor-in-chief of Leader’s weekly *Sunday Leader*, on a busy street just outside Colombo. Wielding metal and wooden poles, they beat him to death. The case has gone unsolved, and CPJ research shows that the government has failed to wage a proper investigation. Lasantha Wickramatunga, one of the country’s most senior journalists, was known for his critical reporting on the government.

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*In a partisan climate, all critical outlets are
seen as political enemies.*

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For his part, Lal Wickramatunga is facing a defamation case stemming from a series of *Sunday Leader* articles in 2008 that detailed alleged irregularities in arms and aircraft purchases. Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, a brother of the president, is seeking 1 billion rupees (nearly US\$9 million) in damages—a figure large enough to bankrupt the company. The case was pending in late year.

Endemic problems have helped foster media partisanship, says Wickramatunga, whose Leader Publications prints journals in English and Sinhala. “In many ways, I do feel our media are partisan out of compulsion. The revenue from advertising and other contracts from the government—the government is the biggest business in Sri Lanka—depends on how close to the regime one is.” Government-paid advertising—legal notices, calls for bids for contracts, public service announcements, and the like—are a significant source of revenue for newspapers. The threat of losing government advertising has long been a way to convince editors to soften a political line, ease up on critical reporting, or take sides against a politician’s opponents.

Access to media has also fueled partisanship. “Traditionally, the political opposition had little or no access to radio or TV coverage,” said one Sri Lankan journalist who asked not to be identified while discussing a sensitive issue. As a result, political parties took to the private print media to express their views.

Sri Lanka has a muscular state media operation. The government owns Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation’s two channels and runs the Independent Television Network’s one channel. It owns 75 percent of the shares

in Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited, more commonly known as Lake House, which publishes 13 daily, weekly, and monthly publications in English, Sinhala, and Tamil. The government also runs a news agency, Lankapuwith, and maintains a website. Online, the Ministry of Defense is particularly active, delivering a stream of opinions and information, sometimes denouncing journalists by name. The site is seen as a platform for Defense Secretary Rajapaksa, who is known to label his critics as “traitors.”

Such messages contribute to a dark climate of fear and violence. Prageeth Eknelygoda, a pro-Fonseka political reporter and cartoonist for the *Lanka eNews* website, disappeared on the night of January 24, two days before the presidential election. Authorities did nothing to locate him or identify who was behind his disappearance, his wife said. The publisher of *Lanka eNews*, Sandaruwan Senadheera, later fled to England in fear for his life. CPJ counted 19 Sri Lankan journalists in exile in 2010, many of whom have abandoned hopes of ever returning home.

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*Legitimizing media suppression is under way
in Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka.*

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In Rajapaksa-era Sri Lanka, the process of legitimizing media suppression is well under way. The 18th Amendment, recently passed by parliament, abolishes presidential term limits and expands government control of media during elections. It gives the president power to appoint a three-member Elections Commission that will issue campaign coverage guidelines to both state and privately owned media. Under the previous provision, the commission regulated only government-run media. This “could amount to strangling any form of dissent, free expression, independent opinion, or even an opposition viewpoint at election time,” according to one media professional who asked not to be identified for fear of retaliation from the government.

And though its title sounds innocuous, the draft for what would be called a Media Development Authority is being blocked into shape. According to an early version, the agency would be tasked with “ensuring clear, consistent, and predictable regulatory policies and guidelines to protect core values and safeguard public interests.” The plan is modeled on the media regulatory agency in Singapore, a nation known for its restrictive press policies.

The government is also drafting licensing regulations for private television stations, Internet service providers, and telephone networks,

which, with their ability to transmit text messages and images, are set to become influential media platforms. The proposed regulations, expected to come before parliament in 2011, are a scaled-down version of those the government sought to introduce in late 2009, which placed restrictions on news telecasts as well as other material disseminated over the Internet.

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Thaksin's control of state TV gave rise to an anti-government channel.

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In Thailand, print publications, community radio stations, Internet sites, and a television station aligned with Thaksin were accused of inciting violence. Video clips from the pro-Thaksin D-Station, for example, show UDD leader Arisman Pongruangrong urging protesters in Chiang Mai province to bring tanks of gasoline to Bangkok to burn the city down. UDD leader Nattawut Saikua was broadcast live on D-Station urging protesters to loot and burn a shopping mall next to the group's protest site, Human Rights Watch reported. The mall was later torched and looted; Nattawut was held on possible terrorism charges.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said the pro-Thaksin protest group used news outlets as “command centers” to organize their protests. After a series of mysterious, early-year bombings, Abhisit's government imposed emergency rule in nearly half of the country's provinces to contain the UDD protests. Those broad powers, which remained in place for much of the year, were used to censor partisan and independent media on national security grounds. Although it refused to provide a specific number, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology acknowledged closing many thousands of websites that carried political content, including the prominent independent news website, *Prachatai*. About 25 community radio stations, four print publications, and one television station were also shut down. (Thailand's traditional print media—including the English-language *Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*—were largely unaffected by the government's censorship although they reported critically on the government, opposition, and military.)

Despite the clampdown, the political battle is still smoldering, forming a background for political anxiety and instability. “One good thing is that partisan media have made Thai people more politically motivated,” said Supinya Klangnarong, coordinator of the Thai Netizen Network, an Internet freedom advocacy group. “But some feel there has been too much freedom and that some media have incited violence. That's made it very difficult for media freedom defenders in this situation.”

There are highly politicized roots to the debate. Thaksin's tight control of state-dominated TV and his government's financial squeezing and legal harassment of print media gave rise to Asia Satellite TV's (ASTV) anti-Thaksin news channel. The partisan station used new satellite technology to get past the state regulatory wall.

ASTV was launched by media tycoon and former Thaksin ally Sondhi Limthongkul, who went on to spearhead the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) protest movement. In 2005, ASTV pioneered the use of the made-for-television political rally, which relied on the unfiltered speeches of PAD protest group leaders who often resorted to ad hominem attacks against their political opponents. ASTV's reality-style programming included 24-hour live coverage of the PAD's three-month siege of Government House and week-long occupation of Bangkok's two international airports in 2008.

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Thai officials played up extreme cases to shutter all sorts of media.

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UDD-aligned media copied ASTV's partisan example, taking it to an extreme. Perhaps disingenuously, the UDD charged in its broadcasts that the state-controlled broadcast media (once manipulated by Thaksin) had, under Abhisit, consistently slanted its coverage in favor of the government.

In 2009, it was Thaksin himself who provided funding to establish *Voice of Taksin*, a glossy fortnightly that bore a variation of his name and indeed amplified his voice. Its editor was Somyot Pruksakasemsuk, who was also a core leader of the UDD and protest organizer. Somyot was detained for about three weeks before being released and launching yet another pro-Thaksin publication, *Red Power*. Although Somyot has not yet been charged with a crime, there is a possibility he could be named in an alleged plot to topple the monarchy or on the terrorism charges that other UDD leaders faced.

Voice of Taksin and *Red Power* were not only aligned with Thaksin's political cause, they went after the UDD's enemies in a vitriolic way. *Voice of Taksin*, for example, ran a February 15 article on the history of global political assassinations that was juxtaposed with a list of Supreme Court judges, including their home addresses and telephone numbers. The court at the time was due to decide whether the state should seize US\$2.3 billion worth of Thaksin's assets on charges of corruption. A bomb was found and defused in front of the Supreme Court the day before the magazine went on newsstands. Other editions of the publication urged the use of Molotov

cocktails against security forces.

The government played up these extreme examples of partisan media to shutter all sorts of critical outlets. “They’re not professional journalists, but they are actually pretty much propaganda arms of a political grouping,” Abhisit said in a September 24 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. “I’m not sure any democracy allows broadcasts of people actually offering rewards if you go and kill the prime minister or if you go and kill other people.” Media monitors confirmed that such threats were broadcast. They were a result of broadcasting live, 24 hours a day, from protest sites where organizers lacked control over what speakers might say.

But what Abhisit left unexplained when he spoke to the Council on Foreign Relations was that his government’s crackdown extended much further, to include media outlets that were independent or were simply sympathetic to the UDD or its offshoots. Many of the sites ran material perceived by authorities to be critical of the monarchy, a criminal offense punishable by 15 years’ imprisonment. Mainstream Thai publications, radio stations, and TV broadcasters have historically censored themselves on royal issues, but some partisan media have pushed the boundaries, including sharp criticism of royal advisers who are not covered by *lese majeste* laws.

The extent of the censorship was difficult to track because the emergency decree exempted the government from issuing written orders to Internet service providers. But in a December report, Thailand’s iLaw Project said the government ordered the blocking of 38,868 websites and Web pages for publishing content critical of the country’s royal family. In all, the group said, the government ordered roughly 44,000 web addresses blocked during 2010.

Thai journalists are concerned that the government may move to strengthen *lese majeste* laws, perhaps by requiring citizens to report online content seen as criticizing the monarchy. More institutionalized censorship could also arise through a licensing regime being managed by a new quasi-independent regulatory commission. The commission was initially envisioned as paving the way for media liberalization, but military officials have urged that the commission address national security issues as part of its mandate.

News outlets, even those with strong philosophical views, can combat this damaging cycle of repression by exerting greater individual independence and demonstrating more professional solidarity.

That has not always happened in Thailand, where some media blurred

the line between journalism and political operations. “Both camps used media to mobilize people,” said Kan Yuenyong, director of the Siam Intelligence Unit, a Bangkok-based think tank that surveyed local media content during Thailand’s political crisis. “They used media not to check and balance, but instead as political fighting tools.” Kan expressed concern that the government’s crackdown on partisan media would stunt the development of new independent media, including emerging satellite-TV stations.

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News outlets can demonstrate more professional solidarity.

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In Sri Lanka, Wickramatunga said, divisions in news media will ensure continued problems. “The only way out is if they collectively stand together irrespective of their positioning,” he said. “The real basis on which to pick sides depends on how the government of the day performs. Support should be based on its performance, and even that should not mean picking sides.”

Bob Dietz, CPJ’s Asia program coordinator, led a mission to Sri Lanka in 2010 and is the co-author of the special report, “In Sri Lanka, no peace dividend for press.” Shawn W. Crispin, CPJ’s senior Southeast Asia representative, is the author of the 2010 report, “In Thailand unrest, journalists under fire.”

Summaries in this chapter were written and researched by CPJ Asia Program Coordinator Bob Dietz, Senior Research Associate Madeline Earp, and Bangkok-based Senior Southeast Asia Representative Shawn W. Crispin.

Afghanistan

Journalists faced numerous challenges from a multifaceted war, instances of government censorship, a culture of official corruption, and factionalism within the domestic media. Two journalists were killed and two others were held by kidnappers throughout the year. The Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, an agency funded by the European Union and European governmental aid agencies, said in September that Afghanistan was at its most dangerous level since the U.S.-led invasion in 2001. Insecurity reigned even as the NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), raised troop levels, largely through the addition of about 30,000 U.S. forces. By the end of November, the United States had about 90,000 troops in Afghanistan, and ISAF troop levels stood at more than 130,000.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Two killed, but press fatalities don't rise in proportion to overall dangers.
- » Kidnappings an ongoing hazard; two French journalists held captive.

KEY STATISTIC

13 Foreign journalists killed in Afghanistan since the 2001 U.S. invasion.

But while the war intensified, the number of combat-related media deaths did not rise in proportion, a reflection of cautious coverage tactics and increased reliance on embedding with the military. But embedding could exact a high price, too. Rupert Hamer, a veteran war correspondent for Britain's *Sunday Mirror*, was killed in January near Nawa in the southern province of Helmand. Hamer and *Sunday Mirror* photographer Philip Coburn, who was injured in the blast, were embedded with a U.S. Marines unit when their armored vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb. A U.S. Army reporter, James P. Hunter, who wrote for the *Fort Campbell Courier* and

other U.S. military publications, was killed in June when an improvised explosive device detonated as he was covering operations in Kandahar. He was the first Army journalist killed in action in Afghanistan since the U.S. military began operations there in October 2001, according to CPJ research.

Thirteen of the 19 journalists killed in Afghanistan since the U.S. invasion in 2001 were foreign reporters, a pattern unlike that seen in most other countries, where local journalists have borne the brunt of violence. *New York Times* photojournalist João Silva was severely injured in October when he stepped on an anti-personnel mine while embedded with U.S. troops near the town of Arghandab in southern Afghanistan. Although he received immediate help from medics, both his legs were lost below the knees. “Those of you who know João will not be surprised to learn that throughout this ordeal he continued to shoot pictures,” Bill Keller, executive editor of *The New York Times*, wrote in a memo to his staff.

The death of a local reporter in a 2009 British military rescue operation remained unexamined. In a March letter to Prime Minister Gordon Brown, CPJ appealed for a second time for an investigation into the September 2009 operation that rescued Stephen Farrell, a British-Irish *New York Times* correspondent, from Taliban kidnappers but led to the crossfire death of Afghan colleague Sultan Munadi. The case had become a flashpoint for many Afghan journalists angered that the life of a local reporter was not worthy of scrutiny. In a reply to CPJ, the British Ministry of Defense expressed regret for the loss of life but said “an inquiry is not warranted.” The British government took a different stance in October when British aid worker Linda Norgrove was killed during an unsuccessful U.S. military effort to free her from Taliban captors. In that case, British Prime Minister David Cameron secured a joint U.S./U.K. investigation into the circumstances.

Local and foreign reporting teams faced risk of kidnapping. France 3 television journalists Hervé Ghesquière and Stéphane Taponier, their translator, Mohammed Reza, and the group’s unidentified driver were still being held in late year by kidnappers in eastern Kapisa province. They were abducted in December 2009. From the beginning, the case was fraught with tension between French journalists and authorities. The administration of French President Nicolas Sarkozy initially expressed irritation at what it perceived to be the reporters’ imprudence. A French general raised the issue of how much a rescue operation would cost. The media themselves were slow to publicize the case. As CPJ Senior European Adviser Jean-Paul Marthoz wrote on the CPJ Blog, “In the first weeks of the drama, the directors of France 3 appeared hesitant. They refrained from publicizing the names of the two journalists until April, arguing that the secrecy

would better guarantee their safety. Many in the media, however, felt that this attitude looked like a disavowal of two seasoned journalists who had reasonably assessed the risk of their trip and met with bad luck.”

At least one other reporter was held captive during the year. Japanese freelance journalist Kosuke Tsuneoka spent more than five months in captivity before he was released to the Japanese Embassy in September. He had gone missing during a reporting trip in a Taliban-controlled region of northern Afghanistan in late March. Tsuneoka’s case illustrated the ambiguity that made the country such a dangerous place to work. Even after his release, the identities of his abductors remained unclear. Afghan security officials said in June that Taliban militants had claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. Tsuneoka said after his release that the kidnappers were not Taliban insurgents, but “a group of corrupt armed factions” whose commander had links to the Afghan government. A Japanese government spokesman insisted that the government had not paid a ransom to the kidnappers.

President Hamid Karzai’s government was behind two prominent cases of censorship. In July, the Ministry of Information briefly shut down private broadcaster Emrooz TV, whose youth-oriented programming had drawn criticism from conservative Islamic leaders. The station’s owner, Member of Parliament Najib Kabuli, said the Iranian ambassador in Kabul had also exerted pressure on the government. A government spokesman denied that Iran influenced the decision. “To create religious division or to create religious problems is against the constitution of Afghanistan,” spokesman Abdul Hakim Hashir told the BBC by way of explanation. The station resumed operations within days.

In June, the Ministry of Communications instructed local Internet service providers to blacklist websites that promoted alcohol, gambling, and pornography, as well as ones that hosted dating and social networking services. But three months after the rules went into effect, the government targeted a news website, the Pashto-language *Benawa*. The site had angered the government when it incorrectly reported that the first vice president, Mohammed Qasim Fahim, had died. (The site corrected the error within a half-hour.) The site eventually came back online, apparently with government approval, after the case drew widespread attention.

Even in the middle of the armed conflict, and with a government reluctant to work with reporters, Afghan media outlets were burgeoning, at least in terms of numbers. According to Mujahid Kakar, the head of news and current affairs for Moby Media Group, Afghanistan’s largest media company, the country had more than 20 private TV channels, 220 radio stations, and 300 newspapers. While many were tied to politicians or their political parties, wealthy businessmen, or leaders of armed factions, there

were enough genuine media operations to begin to form a critical mass.

Afghan journalists had yet to organize themselves into a single professional organization, as several groups vied for predominance. But there was a unified response in March when, in a series of individual meetings, Afghan National Directorate of Security spokesman Said Ansari told media managers not to report live from the scenes of terrorist attacks. Reuters, The Associated Press, and other international media outlets also received the instructions in separate meetings. After a strong negative response from news media, Karzai's office distanced itself from the directive and said it was merely formulating guidelines. A few days later, a group of Afghan editors, journalists, and media owners developed their own voluntary guidelines for live coverage.

Media outlets came together again in July, when they joined with civil-society organizations to press the government to pass legislation to ensure access to public information in conformance with Article 50 of the Afghan Constitution. Motivated by the country's suffocating culture of bribery and corruption, they urged legislation that would define public information, set procedures to obtain information, and provide complaint mechanisms.

When Moby Media Group's Kakar spoke at the United Nations on World Press Freedom Day in May, he said media training and professionalism had not kept pace with the growth of the Afghan press. He urged the United Nations and other international groups to provide support and training to Afghan journalists. "Quite honestly, what Afghan journalists need right now is moral support, because we know that we can survive if we have international support," Kakar told CPJ shortly after he had spoken at the United Nations. "Since the fall of the Taliban, media have been growing rapidly in Afghanistan. There are a lot of people who believe that they have a role in providing information, organizing civil society to prevent human rights abuses, women's rights abuse. Moral support is essential."

Burma

After nearly five decades of uninterrupted military rule, Burma moved toward an uncertain new era in November when it staged national elections and freed the pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The new parliament, although dominated by the military junta's chosen candidates, was the first civilian government in the country since 1962. Military leaders, notorious for their international isolation, sought international legitimacy through the election. "But the vote was so rigged, it had the opposite

effect,” *The Washington Post* noted in an editorial. “Rules were written so that, no matter how people voted, the military would retain control; but even so, the regime could not resist Election Day intimidation and ballot-box stuffing.”

CPJ research showed that military authorities censored and controlled election-related news, suspended local-language publications, targeted Internet sites, and jailed exile-run news services’ undercover reporters. In October, the government-controlled Union Election Commission announced that it would not allow foreign journalists into the country to cover the elections. Thein Soe, the commission’s chairman, justified the ban by noting that international agencies already had local staff based in the country, according to news reports. Bangkok- and Singapore-based foreign journalists told CPJ they had applied for work visas and been refused, although several reporters were able to enter the country on tourist visas.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN BURMA

KEY STATISTIC

- » Junta bars foreign reporters, censors speech prior to national election.
- » Aung San Suu Kyi freed, but government still jails journalists, critics.

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Journalists imprisoned as of December 1, the fourth-highest figure in the world.

The ban on international journalists was one in a series of directives intended to silence independent reporting and dissenting voices before the vote. On July 20, the Ministry of Information’s Press Scrutiny and Registration Board, the government’s main censorship unit, issued a directive that required local publications to directly quote and not paraphrase the constitution, electoral laws, and Union Election Commission rules in their campaign news coverage. Publications that violated the directive risked the revocation of their publishing licenses and other undefined “stern actions,” according to the directive. Censors also barred the use of the phrase “free and fair” in news stories that referred to the elections. On September 14, the Union Election Commission issued a notice that restricted the topics that candidates could address while speaking over state-controlled radio and television. Forbidden subjects were broadly defined as any speech that “harmed security, the rule of law, and community peace.” Candidates were also barred from discussing policies or making any media statements that “tarnished” the image of the state or armed forces.

The rigged balloting drew international condemnation from the United States and others. The Union Solidarity and Development Party, the party of the ruling junta, won more than 75 percent of contested seats in the national and regional parliaments, according to news reports.

The national election was the first since 1990, when Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won by a landslide only to see the military discard the results and retain power. Through a succession of house arrests, the military kept Aung San Suu Kyi out of the public spotlight for 15 of the next 21 years. A week after the 2010 election, the government ended her most recent, seven-year-long house arrest. Thousands of supporters rallied at her party's Rangoon headquarters to hear her first words. "Democracy is when the people keep a government in check," she told the crowd, *The New York Times* reported. "To achieve democracy, we need to create a network, not just in our country but around the world." The 65-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate said she would seek "national reconciliation," adding, "I am prepared to talk with anyone."

At least 13 journalists remained in jail when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census of imprisoned journalists on December 1. The junta increasingly used the harsh Electronics Act—which broadly bans unauthorized use of electronic media, including the Internet, to send information outside the country—to suppress and intimidate reporters who worked for foreign or exile-run news organizations. Because Burma's local media operate under strict state censorship, exile-run and other foreign media filled the news gap with critical reporting and comment.

The Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), an Oslo-based news organization run by Burmese exiles and known for its hard-hitting journalism, was particularly targeted. In June, DVB produced an investigative report, carried by global broadcaster Al-Jazeera, that probed the junta's perceived nuclear weapons ambitions. Another award-winning documentary, "Burma VJ," highlighted the risks that DVB's undercover journalists took while reporting on the 2007 Saffron Revolution, the Buddhist monk-led revolt that was eventually crushed with lethal military force.

DVB publicly confirmed that five of its reporters were imprisoned in late year, but Deputy Director Khin Maung Win told CPJ that several other DVB undercover reporters were behind bars as well. DVB has declined to identify them due to fears that authorities would treat them more harshly if they were found to be undercover reporters.

On January 27, a Rangoon-based prison court sentenced DVB reporter Ngwe Soe Lin, also known as Tun Kyaw, to 13 years in prison on charges related to the Electronics and Immigration acts. The journalist was first arrested in June 2009 after taking video footage of children orphaned by

the 2008 Cyclone Nargis disaster. The documentary, titled “Orphans of Burma’s Cyclone,” was later recognized with a Rory Peck Award for best documentary. DVB had previously referred to Ngwe Soe Lin only as “T” in an attempt to conceal from authorities his identity as an undercover DVB reporter.

His conviction followed a 27-year jail term handed down on December 30, 2009, to DVB reporter Hla Hla Win, who was similarly charged under the Electronics Act. She was first arrested on September 11, 2009, on her way back from a DVB reporting assignment in Pakokku Township in central Burma, where she had conducted interviews with Buddhist monks for a report on the second anniversary of the 2007 uprising.

On April 15, authorities arrested DVB reporter Sithu Zeya while he was filming the aftermath of a bomb explosion that killed nine and injured 170 in the old capital, Rangoon, during a Buddhist New Year celebration. DVB said the 21-year-old reporter was tortured while in police custody and, under duress, confessed that his father, Maung Maung Zeya, also worked secretly as a DVB reporter. Maung Maung Zeya was arrested two days later in his Rangoon home. The father-son reporting team was charged under the Unlawful Associations, Immigration, and Electronic acts and awaited a court verdict in late year.

On October 13, Nyi Nyi Tun, editor of the local-language news publication *Kandarawaddy*, was sentenced to 13 years in prison for “crimes against the state.” He was convicted of violating the Unlawful Associations, Immigration (Emergency Provisions), and Wireless Telegraphy acts, as well as other laws, according to Mizzima, a Burmese exile-run news agency based in New Delhi. After his arrest in October 2009, authorities shut down his news journal, which operated in the country’s Kayah special region.

The government held nearly 2,200 political prisoners throughout the year, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma, a Thailand-based monitoring organization.

Cyber-attacks were launched on September 27 against three exile-run Burma news outlets—*Irrawaddy*, Mizzima News, and DVB—raising questions of government involvement. The distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) attacks shut down *Irrawaddy*’s main website and temporarily blocked access to Mizzima’s sites by overwhelming their servers with artificially created attempts to access their sites. *Irrawaddy* said in a statement that the attacks were more severe than those that forced its site to shut down for three days in 2008. Mizzima Editor-in-Chief Soe Myint told CPJ that most of the DDOS traffic appeared to have originated from two sites that his technical staff said were based in India.

Inside the country, the government continued to restrict Internet freedom, maintaining blocks on exile-run and foreign news sources and foreign-hosted e-mail services. Authorities tightened already strict censorship guidelines for print publications, which have long been forced to publish on a weekly basis to allow time for state censors to approve their copy. The government's censorship arm suspended 10 local publications for the extensive coverage they gave to Aung San Suu Kyi's release, the Burma Media Association reported in November.

Foreign reporters were also singled out for harassment. On March 27, Bangkok-based CNN reporter Dan Rivers was deported after entering the country on a journalist visa to cover the junta's annual Armed Forces Day parade. After traveling five hours with other foreign reporters from the Rangoon airport to the new capital, Naypyidaw, Rivers was denied accreditation for the event and told by officials that he must leave the country.

"There was no explanation, no apology, and no hanging around," Rivers wrote on his blog about the episode, which he said police had videotaped. He was driven by police and immigration officials to Rangoon's airport, where his passport was withheld until just minutes before his flight departed. It was the second time that the journalist was expelled from the country; his previous deportation was prompted by CNN's on-the-ground coverage of the government's weak response to Cyclone Nargis. In November, authorities detained APF journalist Toru Yamaji for entering the country without a visa in the border town of Myawaddy, where troops and ethnic Karen insurgents exchanged fire during the election. He was deported two days later.

A few private media groups discreetly pushed to open new space for reporters. Three local-language news publications, *Foreign Affairs*, *Living Color*, and *The Voice*, partnered to support Myanmar Egress, a nongovernmental organization that held training courses, including sessions on mass communications and advocacy. The military government also allowed foreign- and local-led journalism training sessions, including short courses in election and environmental reporting. One of the courses introduced man-on-the-street interviews to many local publications, according to one trainer, who requested anonymity. Local news journals subsequently published comments about rising food prices and the lack of electricity.

In certain instances, local media fought back against official harassment. Aung Thu Nyein, a *Weekly Eleven Journal* intern reporter, was detained by police on September 13 for taking photos of the damage caused by flooding in central Magway Division. *Weekly Eleven Journal* editors traveled to the region to protest his detention and threatened legal action against the police. The reporter was released days later without charge.

China

Operating under the strictures of the central propaganda department, official Chinese media either ignored or denounced the October 8 award of the Nobel Peace Prize to human rights defender and writer Liu Xiaobo. Authorities, who considered the award an insult, also blacked out coverage of Liu's prize on international news broadcasts from the BBC and CNN. The case highlighted significant, ongoing official censorship, and formed a backdrop for a national discussion on the potential for press reforms. Five days after the award was announced, 23 senior Communist Party members called for a sweeping overhaul of China's media censorship policies. "Our core demand is that the system of censorship be dismantled in favor of a system of legal responsibility," said the authors, largely retired party elders, many of whom held ranking positions in the media. Widely distributed by e-mail and posted on the Sina news portal, the letter criticized the propaganda department's unchecked control on news and information, calling it "an invisible black hand." Though the letter was very likely drafted before the Nobel prize was announced, its message was delivered at a moment of heightened attention.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Cracking down on ethnic press, authorities jail Uighur, Tibetan journalists.
- » Talk of media reform and press rights generates no official changes.

KEY STATISTIC

34 Journalists imprisoned on December 1, tied with Iran for the highest figure in the world.

A more direct message was sent in an October 19 online letter, "On Liu Xiaobo and the Nobel Peace Prize," in which more than 100 Chinese scholars, activists, and lawyers called for democratic reforms, along with the release of Liu and other political prisoners. "We are urging measures be taken as soon as possible so that Liu Xiaobo be freed, that he be reunited with his wife Liu Xia, and that he go to Oslo himself to receive the prize," said the letter, which was blocked within China. Several news agencies reported that Liu Xia herself was under house arrest in late year.

In an October special report, CPJ found some evidence of a changing media landscape. Based on a two-week research mission to China, CPJ's

Madeline Earp reported that mainstream journalists were speaking out more often to protest attacks, harassment, and arrests. Interviews with more than a dozen journalists, lawyers, and analysts, along with a review of several recent cases, pointed to a journalism community asserting the principle of press rights—if not press freedom—and finding success in limited spheres such as business and local coverage. Press protests led to arrests in assaults on journalists, the release of an unjustly jailed reporter, and apologies from newsmakers who sought to intimidate media outlets. But both news coverage and the expression of press rights still faced severe constraints, as the propaganda department continued to bar direct challenges to central authority or the Communist Party, along with independent coverage of sensitive national topics. The same restrictions that prohibited journalists from covering sensitive topics such as ethnic unrest effectively kept reporters and editors from speaking out on related anti-press abuses.

The situation was reflected in CPJ's 2010 census of imprisoned journalists, which charted a spike in work-related jailings. At least 34 journalists were imprisoned on December 1, tying Iran for the highest figure in the world and reflecting a significant jump from the 24 imprisonments that CPJ documented in 2009. The increase was propelled by a series of imprisonments of Uighur and Tibetan journalists that began in the latter half of 2009 and continued into 2010, the details of which emerged only recently in scant news accounts of the detainees' court proceedings. The Uighur and Tibetan journalists covered ethnic issues and the violent regional unrest of recent years, topics that are officially off-limits. Mainstream Chinese journalists were virtually silent as these ethnic writers and editors were charged and convicted on a series of antistate crimes.

And for all the talk of media reform and press rights, Communist Party leaders gave no indication of being ready to make significant changes. In mid-October, when the Communist Party Central Committee met in Beijing for a three-day discussion of the country's five-year development plan, they conducted no open discussion on press reform. Premier Wen Jiabao, who suggested in an October 3 CNN interview that calls for "democracy and freedom will become irresistible," was openly criticized in some official state media a few days after the Central Committee's meeting.

In an interview with CPJ, Chinese media analyst Zhan Jiang pointed out a dichotomy in recent government actions. While Wen and some central government leaders have issued more liberal regulations and statements, they have not pushed for laws in support of press rights because to do so would directly challenge the propaganda department and, by extension, the Communist Party itself. "China has instituted many, many laws in the last 30 years—a transformation, and a good one—but not about the media,"

said Zhan, a professor in the International Journalism and Communication Department at Beijing Foreign Studies University. “Instead, they issue regulations. They know if there was a law, the propaganda department would lose legitimacy.”

Some of the central government’s recent positions have seemed to encourage press rights in the limited areas of business and local news. A 2008 national ordinance on open government information has enhanced the climate for public scrutiny, Zhan and others said. The government also appeared to promote media rights in the April 2009 “National Human Rights Action Plan of China,” developed for the country’s periodic review by the U.N. Human Rights Council. The plan stipulated that a journalist’s “right to conduct interviews, right to criticize, right to produce commentary, and right to publish” were protected by law.

But critics say such statements have been generated for show, as a way to dilute criticism of human rights and press freedom violations. The creation of narrow, state-sanctioned press rights benefits the Chinese government, they say, by providing a limited outlet for journalists’ concerns while diverting criticism and advocacy away from its own policies of information control. As long as the government continues to censor and persecute its critics, they say, its statements about rights are empty. “The Chinese government has long claimed to respect people’s rights—not human rights but citizens’ rights, which are rights that the state grants in its constitution and defines in its laws, rather than those that have their own existence and can’t be infringed,” Andrew Nathan, a China specialist and political science professor at Columbia University, told CPJ.

Internet giant Google highlighted the censorship issue in January when it announced it would no longer filter results on Google.cn, its China-hosted search engine. The impetus, the company said, was a December 2009 cyber-attack originating in China, targeting its infrastructure and that of more than 20 other businesses. Google said the hackers had attempted to compromise the security of the Gmail accounts belonging to advocates of Chinese human rights worldwide. While the identity of the attackers was not clear, evidence suggested they were criminal hackers with sympathy for the Chinese government, if not its direct sponsorship, analysts said.

The government’s stance on the Internet was reflected in an April report from Wang Chen, director of the State Council Information Office, to the standing committee of the National People’s Congress. In sections excised from published versions, the report emphasized the need for further online propaganda and legal checks on the Internet, according to the New York-based advocacy group Human Rights in China.

The National People's Congress adopted revisions to state secrets laws in April that took effect on October 1. The law retained a broad definition of what constituted a state secret, leaving journalists and their sources vulnerable to prosecution. Authorities retained the power to retroactively classify information already in the public domain, New York-based Human Rights Watch noted. The revisions also strengthened the law's electronic reach, requiring Internet and telecommunications companies to restrict transmission of state secrets, according to analysts. The changes codified and intensified existing practices: In 2004, authorities demanded that Yahoo supply e-mail account information that led to the arrest of journalist Shi Tao. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison for e-mailing notes to an overseas website that described a propaganda department directive. The directive was labeled a state secret only after the fact.

The Shi case galvanized international free expression defenders and technology companies, leading to the creation in 2008 of the Global Network Initiative. The initiative sets guidelines for Internet and telecommunications companies to protect privacy and free expression. It also changed the conversation as journalists and human rights defenders were encouraged to share information about online attacks and surveillance. In March 2010, Yahoo informed Beijing-based freelance journalist Kathleen McLaughlin that her account had been improperly accessed. McLaughlin, who headed the media freedom committee for the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China, told CPJ that the Yahoo accounts of at least 10 other Chinese correspondents had been hacked.

Chinese authorities severely restricted the Internet in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region until May, 10 months after authorities clamped down on information concerning the deadly 2009 riots between Han Chinese and ethnic Uighurs. A complete block on Internet access in the region was partially lifted in December 2009, but only to allow access to state-run news sites and sites with content specially adapted for the region.

Uighur journalists faced intense repression. At least seven Uighur journalists, all but one of whom worked online, were imprisoned on charges of endangering state security when CPJ conducted its 2010 census. In one case, an Urumqi court sentenced Gheyret Niyaz, a former state newspaper journalist who edited the Chinese-language Uighur affairs website *Uighurbiz*, to 15 years in prison in July. He had posted articles and given interviews to overseas media about the 2009 riots in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, according to international news reports. In August, website administrator Gulmire Imin was sentenced to life in prison after she was accused of fomenting violence through online posts. No other journalist in China is known to be serving a penalty so harsh.

Authorities also targeted Tibetan journalists. Filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen was serving a six-year prison term on subversion charges related to a documentary in which he asked ordinary Tibetans to speak on camera about their lives under Chinese rule. Three Tibetan writers were jailed in June and July 2010 concerning contributions to the banned Tibetan-language magazine *Shar Dugri* (Eastern Snow Mountain). The writers had criticized China's human rights record regarding Tibet and questioned official Chinese media accounts of ethnic rioting in March 2008. An editor of the magazine was also jailed.

Domestic journalists working for official media faced disciplinary measures when they crossed censorship lines. *Economic Observer* senior Web editor Zhang Hong, for example, was suspended for two months, according to international media reports. He was the only public author of a March 1 editorial, jointly published by 13 newspapers, criticizing policies that restrict internal migration. In May, the Development Research Center, a State Council think tank that runs the Beijing-based *China Economic Times*, removed Bao Yueyang as chief editor and publisher, according to international news reports. Bao had published an investigative report that alleged unsafe vaccines had been given to children in Shanxi province, resulting in at least four fatalities. Journalists said they believed the report had angered local authorities—who denied the claims—and a national government sensitive to health scandals.

The domestic media were more successful in defending their rights in non-political matters. Police eventually apologized to Beijing-based *Caijing* after officers pressured the magazine's editors to reveal their sources for a September report about a private company providing security in the capital. The apology came after media publicized the police pressure, news accounts said. *Caijing's* story said Anyuanding Security and Prevention Technical Support Service had improperly detained citizens to enhance profits, a claim the company denied.

Police in Beijing arrested four suspects in September in separate attacks on two science journalists, Fang Xuanchang and Fang Shimin. Fang Shimin used his Sina micro-blog to publicize the matter, generating a flurry of on-line coverage. "Without the Internet, news of the attack would have been very limited," Fang Xuanchang told CPJ. "I realized afterwards that letting everyone know had spurred police to investigate." A Wuhan urologist allegedly orchestrated the attacks in reprisal for a 2005 investigation by the Fangs that he believed had thwarted a potential academic appointment, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

CPJ research shows that journalists for unofficial media remained vulnerable. In February, a court in Sichuan sentenced Tan Zuoren, an activist who collected data on schoolchildren fatalities in the 2008 Sichuan

earthquake, to five years in prison for inciting subversion against the state. The court cited a 2007 article published on overseas websites that contained pro-democracy sentiments, according to international news reports.

Other dichotomies emerged in news media coverage in 2010. In some instances, official news media were granted a wide berth except when it came to sensitive details. In other cases, unofficial online media generated national publicity for stories that official media could not touch.

Domestic coverage abounded in April when a 7.1-magnitude earthquake hit Yushu, a predominantly ethnic Tibetan region of western Qinghai province. But the reports glossed over ethnic tensions between Tibetans and Han Chinese, according to overseas commentators. Exiled Tibetan groups noted that by excluding such references, the flood of coverage served the government's goal of projecting a harmonious and unified China.

An October accident in which a speeding car struck and injured a Hebei University student illustrated the gap between official media and unofficial online media. The driver waved off security guards who tried to stop him, saying that his father was Li Gang, deputy police chief in the Beishi district of Baoding. As recounted in *The New York Times* and other news stories, the propaganda department moved swiftly to clamp down on coverage of the accident, which reinforced a perception that the powerful receive favorable treatment in China. But the story spread widely across unofficial online media, leading to national jokes, lyrics, and contests with the catchphrase "My father is Li Gang!"

Indonesia

Indonesia slipped backward on press freedom as President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's government sought to balance progressive desires for an industrialized society with the expectations of the country's conservative Islamic population. Three reporters were killed with impunity in rural areas, a magazine was attacked after questioning the financial holdings of top national police officers, and the editor of the defunct *Playboy Indonesia* was jailed in a politically motivated case. Threats of censorship emerged as some officials called for restrictions on Internet activity. And while the Constitutional Court struck down elements of a Suharto-era book-banning law, it left the government empowered to ban books with court approval.

In the capital, Jakarta, the appearance of an online sex video of a pop star and two television personalities early in the year led to renewed calls for restrictions on Internet content. A bill to do that had been on the table in 2009 but was pulled back after polls showed that the public was overwhelmingly against the move. The original bill had been put forward by Communication and Information Minister Tifatul Sembiring, a leader of the conservative Prosperous Justice Party. No formal legislation was proposed by late year, but the tension between conservative and progressive elements was laid bare.

A similar dynamic was at work in the conviction of Erwin Arnada, editor of *Playboy Indonesia*, on charges of publishing indecent pictures in a 2006 issue of the magazine.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN INDONESIA

KEY STATISTIC

- ▶ Nation slides backward on press freedom; censorship threats emerge.
- ▶ Three reporters murdered and magazine attacked, all with impunity.

2 Years' imprisonment given to *Playboy Indonesia* editor in a politicized prosecution.

Arnada began serving a two-year prison term in October, after the Supreme Court reversed two lower court acquittals. The magazine, which closed in mid-2007 after printing just 10 issues, had come under fire from the hard-line Islamic Defenders Front, or FPI. CPJ and other press groups expressed concern that Arnada's prosecution was politically motivated and urged on by conservative groups such as the FPI. In comments made to *The New York Times*, FPI leader Ahmad Shobri Lubis acknowledged that *Playboy Indonesia's* photographs were less revealing than those printed in many other Indonesian publications. Defense lawyers asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling, a case that was pending in late year.

"Despite being unjustly treated as a dangerous criminal and imprisoned, I have to remain strong," Arnada wrote from Cipinang Prison in a November piece published on the CPJ Blog. "Luckily, I see a lot of support from local and international organizations stating my innocence. This support has made me strong and helped me to survive in prison. Now I fill my days with reading books, writing a journal, and praying. For these are the only things I can do in here while waiting for my ruling review to be accepted by the Supreme Court."

The courts also addressed a pivotal book-banning case. In December 2009, the attorney general's office banned five books for their political content under powers that had been in place since the Suharto era, which ended in 1998. Twenty more books were under evaluation, and most would have been banned, too, according to a statement from the attorney general's office, were it not for a January 8 public statement from 82 human rights activists, journalists, and academics calling for the law to be struck down, local and international media reported.

The judiciary's response was mixed. In October, the Constitutional Court revoked the attorney general's unchecked power to ban books, calling it "the approach of an authoritarian state, not one based on law." But the court ruled narrowly on the issue, finding that the attorney general may still monitor printed material and request that lower courts issue bans.

Indonesian media reported widely on a standoff between the national police force and *Tempo* magazine, which published a cover story in June that detailed the financial holdings of high-ranking police officers. Accompanied by an illustration of a uniformed officer with piggy banks, the story was headlined, "Overweight piggy banks of police officers." In an apparently well-organized effort, groups of men in civilian clothes sought to buy up newsstand copies en masse in Jakarta; *Tempo* countered by printing more copies. The threat grew darker, though, when unidentified assailants tossed three gasoline bombs at *Tempo's* offices. No injuries were reported, but no arrests were made in the attack. The head of the police public relations department denied involvement, asserting without evidence that the magazine staged the attack as a marketing gimmick. Police briefly filed criminal defamation charges against the magazine in connection with the story, but soon dropped the case.

Three journalists working in remote areas were murdered with impunity. In December, the badly bruised body of Alfrets Mirulewan was found on a secluded beach in Kisar, in the Maluku Islands. The editor had gone missing two days earlier while reporting on allegedly unlawful fuel sales, according to news accounts. Ridwan Salamun, a correspondent for Sun TV, was stabbed while covering violent clashes in August between local villagers in the Tual area of the Maluku Islands. He was using a television camera when he was attacked in the middle of a melee, the official Antara news agency reported.

And in July, a search team recovered the body of reporter Ardiansyah Matra's from a river in the small town of Merauke, on the southern tip of Papua province. Matra's, who worked for the local broadcaster Merauke TV, had been missing for two days. He and at least three other journalists had received threatening text messages during recent, hotly contested local

elections, according to the Indonesian Alliance of Independent Journalists. The news website *Kompas* cited one threat as saying: “To cowardly journalists, never play with fire if you don’t want to be burned. If you still want to make a living on this land, don’t do weird things. We have data on all of you and be prepared for death.” No arrests were reported in any of the three murders.

Nepal

The repeated failure to elect a leader cast doubt on the success of Nepal’s transition from a monarchy enmeshed in civil war to a democratic republic. While a coalition government was elected in 2008, two prime ministers have since resigned, leaving a power vacuum that India and China have been accused of exploiting. Law and order suffered as multiple political parties jockeyed for influence. Three prominent media owners were killed for unknown motives. Attacks on working journalists continued throughout the year, and there were reports of political groups torching newspapers to prevent distribution of news they did not like.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Three media owners slain. Kantipur group faces threats, obstruction.
- » Maoist cadres burn copies of two Kathmandu newspapers.

KEY STATISTIC

7th

Ranking on CPJ’s Impunity Index, reflecting one of the world’s worst records in solving press murders.

Newspapers in Nepal spent the early months of 2010 counting down to the expiration of the country’s constitution on May 28. The deadline also marked the end of interim rule by the Constituent Assembly, the legislative authority tasked with maintaining a government until it produces the new constitution. With the drafting being nowhere near complete, parties still bickered over the terms of the vote to extend the deadline—and their own leadership—until after midnight on the final day, before agreeing to extend the assembly’s lifetime for another year.

Former Maoist rebels of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) held a majority in the assembly, but their leader, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, resigned as prime minister in 2009 over a dispute with the chief of

the army. The Maoists refused to cooperate with his replacement, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) candidate, who officially stepped down on June 30 but continued to act as caretaker as repeated rounds of assembly polls failed to select a replacement.

Apparently unrelated killings of three prominent media owners shook the journalism community. No motives were immediately disclosed in the shooting murders of Jamim Shah in Kathmandu in February, Arun Singhaniya in Dhanusa district in March, and Devi Prasad Dhital in the district of Dang in July, according to CPJ research. Some journalists believed they were the targets of criminal groups who extort business owners for cash and assassinate those who don't comply.

The death of Singhaniya, chairman of the Today Group, heightened the sense of vulnerability among journalists in the unstable southern Terai region. Uma Singh, a journalist with the group's news outlets, *Janakpur Today* and *Radio Today*, was fatally stabbed in 2009 for reporting on land seizures. No specific connection was immediately established between the two killings, but at least three armed groups who advocate for political independence for ethnic Madhesis in the Terai plains around Dhanusa claimed responsibility for Singhaniya's murder. Factions of Madhesi activists frequently threaten journalists in relation to coverage, and a similar group claimed to have killed Singh. A police investigation in the Singh case, which looked at local Maoists as suspects, was pending in late year.

On June 14, also in Dhanusa, two unidentified men on motorcycles fired shots at Mohan Gole, local correspondent for the state-owned *Rastriya Samachar Samiti* news agency and assistant editor of the weekly *Sagarmatha Khabar Saptahik*, as he was riding his motorcycle with a local human rights leader as passenger. Bullets lodged in Gole's helmet and motorcycle, but there were no injuries, according to local news reports. The motive for the attack was not clear.

Journalists at the Kantipur group were threatened by telephone and e-mail for reporting on the murder of Jamim Shah, chairman of television and satellite Space Time Network, Kunda Dixit, publisher of the *Nepali Times*, reported on the CPJ Blog. Kantipur publications reported that Shah had links to Pakistani intelligence and likened his murder to that of a politician, carried out by an Indian criminal 11 years ago for alleged "anti-Indian" activities.

The Kantipur group also accused the Indian Embassy of interfering with its coverage. Its English-language newspapers, *Kantipur* and the *Kathmandu Post*, accused the embassy of punitively withdrawing advertisements from the company, according to news reports. In June, shipments of

newsprint from India for the *Kantipur* papers were delayed for more than a week by what India's embassy in Nepal called a routine customs investigation. *Kantipur* and the *Post* protested that the delay was in retaliation for a report saying Indian Ambassador Rakesh Sood pressured Nepal's government to award a contract for production of machine-readable passports to an Indian company. While the newsprint was eventually delivered, ill feelings lingered. In September, the Indian embassy accused *Kantipur* newspapers of reporting negatively about an Indian company's products after failing to obtain company advertising, according to Indian daily *The Hindu*. *Kantipur* denied the accusations.

In September, *The Economist* reported that Ambassador Sood had called a number of newspaper editors to encourage coverage of an audio recording of a Maoist leader, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, and an unidentified Chinese man discussing how to bribe lawmakers to elect a Maoist prime minister. The Maoists denied any bribery allegations while acknowledging that parts of the recording may have been authentic.

Former prime minister Dahal, chairman of the pro-China Unified Maoists Party, suggested a "China, Nepal, and India tripartite alliance" to ensure Nepal's stability, news reports said. He made the comments in October soon after he returned to Kathmandu from a five-day trip to China. Pro-India politicians quickly criticized the idea, driving a deeper wedge into the coalition government. Soon after, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called China-Nepal relations a "model" and announced the opening of a China Study Center in the eastern Nepalese town of Jhapa, along the West Bengal border.

While some journalists worried about outside international infringements on their freedom, others had concerns about their personal safety. A group of men armed with metal rods attacked Lilanath Ghimire, a reporter for *Fast Times Daily*, in Dharan, eastern Sunsari district, on August 15 when he arrived at a restaurant to check out a tip that a police officer was intoxicated and dancing with patrons, according to local news reports. Ghimire was injured when he was struck in the right eye with a glass. In October, a banner was raised in the center of Dharan, threatening reporters: "We will take action against you."

Groups affiliated with multiple political parties assailed the press, according to local press freedom groups. Maoists were accused in two prominent cases in western Nepal. Mandavi Radio reporter Keshav Bohara said he was abducted in Pyuthan district on June 30. He told police the next day that five people had held him blindfolded in a car for 36 hours while questioning him about his report that the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) had occupied land belonging to a prominent Hindu temple, according to local news reports. No arrests were reported in the case.

The Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) said Maoists were behind a late-2009 attack in Rukim in which masked assailants slashed 22-year-old Tika Bista with razor blades and left her in critical condition in a forest. The federation said the attack was in reprisal for the journalist's article in the newspaper *Jantidhara* that described a politician widowed by Maoists in 1999. Bista survived, but underwent extensive hospital treatment. A Maoist spokesman alleged that she had attempted suicide but did not offer evidence, according to local journalist Guna Raj Luitel, reporting on the CPJ blog. FNJ dismissed the Maoist claims as a cover-up and, within a few weeks, accused Maoists of being behind the attack.

On May 28, publishers of the *Nagarik* and *Republica* dailies in Kathmandu accused pro-Maoist cadres of burning copies of the two dailies and disrupting their distribution in other parts of the country. The papers had reported on the purported kidnapping of a local doctor, apparently stemming from an internal party dispute.

The failure to prosecute these attacks mirrored a larger trend of impunity for atrocities committed by both Maoists and monarchists in the decade-long civil war. With seven unsolved journalist murders on record since 1992, Nepal ranked seventh in the world on CPJ's 2010 Impunity Index, which highlights countries where journalists are regularly murdered and governments fail to solve the crimes.

Pakistan

Pakistan was the deadliest nation for the press in 2010 as violence spread well beyond the Afghan border region. Eight journalists and one media support worker were killed in relation to their work and numerous others were injured, many in suicide bomb attacks.

Pakistani journalists also saw a profound threat from their own government. On September 4, men in commando-style uniforms abducted Umar Cheema, a prominent political reporter for the English-language daily *The News*, in a suburb of Islamabad, holding him for two days as they beat and humiliated him. For journalists, the case was reminiscent of earlier abductions by suspected security agents. Cheema, who directly blamed the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency for the attack, said his abductors demanded that he stop writing articles critical of the government. President Asif Ali Zardari pledged the government would investigate, but journalists were deeply skeptical that anyone would be held accountable. In a widely cited editorial in support of Cheema, the English-

language daily *Dawn* wrote, “This paper’s stand is clear: The government and its intelligence agencies will be considered guilty until they can prove their innocence.” In an e-mail to CPJ, Cheema said, “I don’t think the government is serious in locating the culprits. Their publicly expressed resolve and the commitments they made were for public consumption, nothing more.”

Zardari, who took office in 2008, undermined his own credibility with the press and public. Pakistani media were critical of the government’s handling of catastrophic summer flooding but reserved their harshest judgment for the president, who continued a trip to Britain and France even as flood waters rose. In response, the president’s Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) organized demonstrations against Geo and ARY television, two stations that took the lead in the criticism. The stations were forced off the air in Karachi and much of Sindh province for days after PPP activists severed cable connections. PPP supporters also resorted to sometimes-violent demonstrations outside the offices of the stations and their cable distributors. But 82 percent of respondents to a *Dawn* opinion poll faulted the government for an inadequate response to the disaster. The floods, which began with unusually heavy monsoon rains in July, had devastating consequences. By September, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said more than 1,700 people had died and 1.8 million homes had been damaged or destroyed. The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) said that at least 213 journalists saw their homes washed away in the flood waters. Journalist Asma Anwar lost her life in flooding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (the former North West Frontier Province).

Beyond the flood, the government’s attitude toward the media occasionally took a turn for the absurd. Journalist organizations in Larkana, Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad observed a “black day” of protest in reaction to a resolution passed by the Punjab Assembly in Lahore on June 9. The legislature had condemned the media for “promoting antigovernment propaganda” by reporting that some lawmakers had fabricated their university degrees. A few days later, after polls showed that most Pakistanis were as angry about the phony diplomas as the press was, the assembly passed a separate resolution praising the role of the media for “the restoration of democracy in the country.”

These sorts of hijinks might be amusing if they were not taking place against a backdrop of mounting terrorist attacks from the Taliban, Taliban-allied organizations, and several regional separatist groups. The attacks were not just along the Afghan border and in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), but in Quetta, Karachi, and Lahore, too. Some Taliban groups, under military pressure in their regular redoubts in FATA, started to turn toward urban areas, where they felt they could hide within the

populace and operate with relative impunity. Karachi, in particular, saw an increase in Taliban-driven attacks and violence between Shiite and Sunni groups.

Journalists continued to face severe threats in areas along the border with Afghanistan, where the Pakistani military conducted sporadic operations. In April, a Taliban spokesman said the group was angry about the way it was being portrayed on Pakistani television and issued “a last warning” to numerous Pakistani media outlets. According to translations in Pakistani English-language papers, the message asked: “Why is the media only conveying the army’s point of view? Is this proof that the media is also working as an ally for the government and the army? Or they are being forced to hide the truth?” Media coverage of military operations was largely limited to embedded reporters, who were forced to accept severe censorship rules if they wanted to accompany troops during their operations.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN PAKISTAN

KEY STATISTIC

- » Suicide bombings take devastating toll on media, killing, injuring dozens.
- » Journalists face threats from all sides, notably Taliban and the ISI.



Journalists killed in relation to their work in 2010, the highest figure in the world.

Bombings took a heavy toll on the press. On September 3, a suicide bomber detonated explosives during a Shiite demonstration in Quetta, triggering gunfire and other violence. Mohammad Sarwar, a driver for Aaj TV, died in the melee, and Ejaz Raisani, a cameraman for Samaa TV, died of gunshot wounds three days later, news reports said. Eight other journalists were reported injured. The Pakistani Taliban and the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi each claimed responsibility for the bombing, which was just one in a series of recent assaults on Shiite gatherings, local news reports said. Some news reports linked the violence that followed the Quetta bombing to surviving protesters.

Suicide bombings claimed the lives of two Samaa TV journalists on successive days in April. On April 16, cameraman Malik Arif was killed and five other journalists were injured in a bombing at a hospital in Quetta, news reports said. The next day, a suicide bombing killed correspondent Azamat Ali Bangash as he was covering food distribution in a refugee camp near Orakzai, in FATA.

In February, a bomb blast injured Express News TV reporter Amjad Ali Shah and cameraman Muhammad Imranullah Siddiqui, along with Muhammad Israr, a reporter for the Pashto-language television channel AVT Khyber. They were accompanying a convoy of security forces in the Lower Dir district of northwestern Pakistan. The bomb exploded while federal paramilitary personnel were escorting journalists and U.S. soldiers to the reopening of a girls' school destroyed by the Taliban in 2009, according to local and international media reports. Two days later, a double bombing in Karachi targeting Shiites injured 12 journalists and media workers.

Militants directly targeted a journalist's family in a July attack. Assaultants threw grenades and opened fire on a home occupied by the family of Zafarullah Bonari, a correspondent for ARY and Al-Jazeera. At least six women and children were seriously injured, local media reported. The tactic was not new. Sher Khan Afridi, president of the Khyber Union of Journalists, told CPJ that militants had targeted six journalists' homes for destruction in 2009.

Three journalists were targeted for murder. In September, gunmen pumped several shots into Misri Khan, president of the Hangu Union of Journalists, outside the Hangu Press Club in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to PFUJ. Hangu, a volatile town near the border with Afghanistan, has long been the site of unrest between militant groups in the area. In May, Ghulam Rasool Birhamani's body was found outside the village of Wahi Pandhi in Sindh province, a day after he was reported kidnapped. PFUJ and the media support group Pakistan Press Foundation said his body was badly scarred and showed evidence of torture. Birhamani, 30, was a reporter for the Sindhi-language daily *Sindhu Hyderabad*. And in February, local and international media reported that Ashiq Ali Mangi was fatally shot while on his way to a press club in the town of Gambat, north of Karachi. PFUJ said that Mangi, a reporter for the private television channel Mehran TV, may have been targeted because of his coverage of a feud between two ethnic groups.

For Pakistan's burgeoning broadcast media, surging violence posed questions of ethics and professionalism. By early 2010, eight leading television channels had adopted a voluntary system of editorial restraint in live coverage of terrorist attacks, hostage situations, and similar violent events. The channels agreed to avoid graphic images of the dead and injured, discourage speculative reporting, and implement delay mechanisms in hostage situations. The voluntary guidelines were seen as fending off the government's recurring attempts to regulate coverage.

With a low literacy rate and relatively poor landline systems, Internet penetration in Pakistan remained low. The International Telecommunication Union estimated there to be nearly 19 million Internet users as of June

2009, a penetration of about 10.6 percent. But digital mobile devices using the country's well-established cellular phone system were increasingly common. Such digital platforms will most likely come under much closer scrutiny in the coming years.

In May, Pakistani authorities blocked domestic access to Facebook for about two weeks after a campaign on the social networking site had solicited caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, news reports said. The next month, Facebook and Twitter users in Pakistan reported a strange set of problems: They found themselves already logged in when they visited the sites—but with the accounts and privileges of complete strangers. They could also read private Facebook information and Twitter messages belonging to other users. Internet analysts speculated that the problems arose when the government-owned Pakistan Telecommunication Company tested the use of proxies as a local censorship system.

Philippines

Trial proceedings began in September for the first 19 defendants in the 2009 massacre in Maguindanao province, raising hopes that impunity's grip on the Philippines would finally be loosened. But in a special report issued in November, CPJ uncovered efforts to subvert the judicial process, including bribe offers to victims' families, and the use of intimidation and deadly violence against witnesses. CPJ's investigation also revealed deeply flawed forensic work and widespread lack of cooperation among law enforcement officials, both of which could hinder the prosecution.

Among the first defendants on trial was Andal Ampatuan Jr., mayor of the town that bears his name and where the massacre took place. Authorities identified Ampatuan as the lead suspect in the atrocity, allegedly orchestrating police and paramilitary forces in the brazen November 2009 attack against supporters of a rival politician. Journalists were accompanying the politician's convoy as it was on its way to file gubernatorial candidacy papers. The attack—the deadliest event for the press ever recorded by CPJ—claimed 57 lives, including those of 32 journalists and media support workers.

Another 47 suspects were in custody but had not gone to trial as of late year. A total of 130 other suspects, including police officials and members of the Ampatuans' 3,000-strong militia, were still at large in late year. Six members of the politically influential Ampatuan clan were among those in custody.

The election in May of President Benigno Aquino offered hope for a significant change in approach from that taken by his predecessor, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The Arroyo administration had created a series of police task forces to address media killings, but in the eyes of press advocates, it never demonstrated the political will to bring journalists' killers to justice. In 2010, the Philippines ranked third on CPJ's Impunity Index, a list of countries where journalists are killed regularly and governments fail to solve the crimes. Only war-afflicted Iraq and Somalia had worse records.

The Arroyo administration maintained close political ties to the Amatuans, who helped secure votes in Maguindanao during the 2004 general elections. Arroyo's political failures were never more evident than in April

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

KEY STATISTIC

- » Flawed procedures, witness intimidation, bribes mar Maguindanao prosecution.
- » Aquino pledges reform, but two more journalists are murdered for their work.

3rd Ranking on CPJ's Impunity Index, reflecting one of the world's worst records in solving press murders.

when the outgoing justice secretary, Alberto Agra, sought to free two Amatuan clan members who had been charged in the massacre on conspiracy allegations. His abrupt order to release Zaldy and Akmad Ampatuan—governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and vice governor of Maguindanao, respectively—drew a public rebuke from rank-and-file prosecutors who said in a statement: “We are deeply concerned that the resolution will all the more convince a long skeptical public that our criminal justice system is impotent when the accused are politically influential.” Facing a mutiny in his own ranks, Agra reversed the order three weeks later, and the men remained in custody.

The Aquino administration's interest in changing the climate of impunity was on display on August 24, when a CPJ delegation led by board member Sheila Coronel met for 90 minutes with senior justice officials at the presidential residence, Malacañang Palace. Richard Fadullon, the government's lead attorney in the Maguindanao case, and Geronimo Sy, the assistant secretary of justice, affirmed the government's commitment while noting that it will be a long process. Many analysts expect the Maguindanao prosecution to stretch out over many years. Aquino offered his own pledge in a brief meeting with CPJ on September 26. He stated his

government's intention not only to pursue the killers in the Maguindanao case, but to address the overall climate of impunity. Administration officials say they have an enormous task, given entrenched dysfunction in the judicial system.

Throughout 2010, the Maguindanao defense team filed a series of motions—including ones to remove both judge and prosecutors—that had the effect of delaying the proceedings. Press advocates have long complained that defense attorneys exploit lenient court rules to drag out proceedings in the hopes of breaking the will of the prosecution. CPJ research shows the tactic has been effective in a number of cases.

As the Maguindanao case headed to trial, people claiming to represent the Ampatuan clan made financial offers to victims' family members in exchange for dropping their support for the prosecution. Luisa Subang, widow of Francisco "Ian" Subang, a slain reporter with *Mindanao Focus*, a community newspaper, told CPJ she was offered 500,000 pesos (US\$11,300). Nancy Dela Cruz, the mother of the slain reporter Gina Dela Cruz, told CPJ that she received a 3 million peso (US\$68,000) offer in exchange for her signature on a blank piece of paper. Neither Subang nor Dela Cruz accepted the bribes, they told CPJ. While state prosecutors would pursue the Maguindanao killings as crimes against the Philippine people, they fear that if enough families accepted financial offers, it would weaken the solidarity of the prosecution, as well as the resolve of witnesses to testify.

Prosecution witnesses were also targeted. Ampatuan Vice Mayor Rasul Sangki testified during bail proceedings in January that he witnessed Andal Ampatuan Jr. shoot the first massacre victim with a high-powered rifle. The day after the testimony, Sangki's house came under mortar attack from unknown assailants, though he suffered only minor injuries. Sangki's personal lawyer, Richard Petisme, was shot in the neck on July 2 by unknown assailants while leaving his office in Cotabato City in Mindanao.

Another potential witness, Suwaib Upham, known publicly as Jesse, was killed in June under unclear circumstances. A reputed member of the Ampatuans' militia who turned prosecution witness in the case, Upham had given several press interviews detailing his role as one of the gunmen in the killings. He was in the process of enrolling in the Justice Department's witness protection program at the time of his murder. The government was dealt another blow in November when Leo Dacera, one of the lead prosecutors, died of an apparent heart attack.

Even with all the focus on the Maguindanao trial, journalists continued to come under fire. At least two journalists were killed in direct relation to their work during the year, while a third was slain under unclear circumstances, according to CPJ research.

On June 14, Desidario Camangyan, a reporter for Sunrise FM in Manay, Davao Oriental province, was shot from behind at close range while hosting an amateur singing contest, according to local and international news reports. He died at the scene, in front of an audience that included his wife and 6-year-old son. Police said the gunman escaped on foot. Sunrise manager, Bobong Alcantara, told local media that Camangyan's reports on illegal logging may have motivated the attack.

Joselito Agustin, a reporter for DZJC radio, died on June 16, a day after two gunmen on motorcycles shot him near Baccara town in northern Philippines. Agustin, shot in late evening while returning from work, had received text-message death threats in the weeks before his murder, colleague Nick Malasig told The Associated Press.

DWEB radio reporter Miguel Belen died on July 31, three weeks after he was shot multiple times by two motorcycle-riding assailants in Bicol province in central Philippines. Two suspects were arrested, but police did not immediately disclose a motive. One suspect was identified as being a member of the New People's Army, a decades-old communist-inspired insurgent group. CPJ was investigating the circumstances to determine whether the murder was work-related.

CPJ research shows the impunity crisis has been exacerbated by the unwillingness of some Philippine officials to acknowledge the problem. That failure was on display in March when Midas Marquez, a spokesman for the Philippine Supreme Court, told local reporters that he considered death threats made against journalist Marites Dañguilan Vitug to be "funny" and "ridiculous." The threats began shortly after the release of Vitug's book, *Shadow of Doubt: Probing the Supreme Court*, which critiqued the inner workings of the high court. In a statement, CPJ condemned Marquez's remarks.

Prosecutors did make an important advance in one press-related murder. In January, a Cebu City court sentenced Muhammad Maulana to life in prison in the 2005 murder of Edgar Amoro. Amoro was a witness to the 2002 killing of Pagadian City journalist Edgar Damalerio. Although Amoro was gunned down before he could testify, his sworn statement to police helped convict local police officer Guillermo Wapile in the Damalerio slaying.

Broadcast journalists found themselves under intense criticism from the government and segments of the public over their coverage of a hostage crisis. On August 23, eight Hong Kong tourists aboard a sightseeing bus were killed when police engaged in a shootout with the hostage-taker in the heart of Manila. The standoff and botched rescue attempt was carried live by local news broadcasters, who came under criticism for revealing

police plans to the gunman, who was watching the live coverage on the bus' television monitor and listening to radio reports. In October, just before announcing the findings of a review panel charged with investigating the incident, President Aquino chided journalists by saying that while he champions freedom of the press, "freedom was not tempered with appropriate responsibility."

But the government dropped its initial calls to regulate media coverage during future crisis situations. Press groups said a professional review of the media's performance was due, but they rejected government controls. In a statement on August 25, the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines said that "legislated restrictions on media coverage are more dangerous and could pave the way for abuses and excesses by authorities in responding to crisis situations." It went on to note: "Some colleagues clearly violated ethical standards and established procedures and guidelines in covering crisis situations including hostage-taking incidents."

Sri Lanka

In his Independence Day speech on February 4, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared that the country "cannot be developed with harassment, gross punishments, or by the gun." But the sentence that followed—"Discipline is not revenge"—hinted at the repressive measures his administration would continue to pursue against critical news media.

The January 26 presidential elections that returned Rajapaksa to office with a resounding majority were followed in April by parliamentary elections that left his United People's Freedom Alliance with 144 of 225 seats. The party was then able to build a coalition giving Rajapaksa the two-thirds majority he needed to rewrite the constitution. And so he did. On September 8, parliament passed a constitutional amendment striking down the two-term limit on the presidency. With the amendment, Rajapaksa could retain power indefinitely.

Despite its electoral mandate and the nation's first full year of peace after decades of civil strife, the Rajapaksa administration chose not to relax its anti-media policies. In a May special report, CPJ found the government was continuing to repress the news media, and that individual journalists still faced violence, harassment, and detention. The government continued on that path in July, when it announced plans to launch a Media Development Authority (MDA) modeled after Singapore's strict media agency. Several commentators in Sri Lanka noted that Sri Lanka's MDA proposal

repeated the Singaporean measure almost word for word.

Attacks on journalists continued to go uninvestigated. The mysterious disappearance of anti-Rajapaksa cartoonist and columnist Prageeth Eknelygoda in January set a tone of intimidation for the rest of the year. His wife, Sandhya, told CPJ that she was unable to persuade police to investigate or the Human Rights Court to act on her lawsuit seeking action. Staff at *Lanka eNews*, the news website where Eknelygoda worked, faced intimidation and threats; in March, Editor Sandaruwan Senadheera fled into exile in England.

Sri Lanka ranked fourth on CPJ's 2010 Impunity Index, a ranking of countries where journalists are regularly murdered and governments fail to solve the crimes. Only Iraq, Somalia, and the Philippines had worse records. Ten Sri Lankan journalists have been murdered over the past decade for their coverage of civil war, human rights, politics, military affairs, and corruption, but not a single conviction has been obtained. Most of those killings have come during Rajapaksa's time as prime minister and president, CPJ research showed.

No case was more emblematic than the unsolved slaying of the popular editor and columnist Lasantha Wickramatunga, who was beaten to death by eight assailants on a busy suburban Colombo street on a weekday morning in January 2009. The government staged investigative hearings without making evident progress in identifying the culprits. No progress was reported in another January 2009 attack, a bombing at the studios of Sirasa TV, the country's largest independent news broadcaster.

Government investigators did devote time and attention to harassing critical journalists. In early 2010, the Criminal Investigation Division detained Chandana Sirimalwatte, chief editor of the Marxist weekly *Lanka*, for about two weeks. The BBC, citing the division director, said the journalist was being held under emergency anti-terror regulations. Interrogators told Sirimalwatte that he had been detained on orders from Secretary of Defense Gothabaya Rajapaksa, the president's brother. Sirimalwatte was eventually released without charge.

One positive note was hit during the year: On June 10, *OutreachSL* editor J.S. Tissainayagam arrived at Washington's Dulles International Airport, ending a two-year-long ordeal of incarceration and prosecution. The Tamil editor had been jailed in March 2008 on terrorism charges that CPJ concluded were in retaliation for his critical reporting on human rights issues. Released on bail in January, Tissainayagam was granted a presidential pardon on May 3, World Press Freedom Day. CPJ research shows that at least 19 Sri Lankan journalists were in exile.

In a meeting with CPJ, Attorney General Mohan Peiris said he was prepared to offer protection to any journalist who returned from exile. “Speaking for myself—and I’m fairly sure the government will back me up on this—there is no question that the government needs our journalists,” he told CPJ in his office. “They must come back and work with us and help set up the structures so that we can work together and we can respect each other. We must work with these institutions because we need them. We know if they stay outside and attack the government, that is not useful.” When asked if the government would ensure their safety, Peiris said, “Of course, if they come back, there must be assurance on our part that they won’t come to any harm.”

There were few takers. Lasantha Wickramatunga’s wife, Sonali, now in exile in the United States, said in an e-mail message to CPJ that administration officials “cheered on the sidelines as this government rode roughshod over the human rights of thousands and killed journalists.”

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN SRI LANKA

KEY STATISTIC

- » Anti-government cartoonist missing; police make no evident effort to find him.
- » Government readies plan for a strict media regulatory agency.

19

Journalists in exile, having fled violence, imprisonment, and intimidation.

Another case reflected the ongoing burden of operating independent media in Sri Lanka: On July 30, an arson attack on the offices of the Voice of Asia Network in the heart of Colombo injured two staff members. The fire destroyed the studios of the group’s Siyatha TV station, although its three radio stations were able to remain on the air. Though the stations were better known for entertainment than news, the owners had supported opposition candidate Sarath Fonseka in the presidential elections.

With the civil conflict over, some of the international community began to distance itself from Rajapaksa’s heavy-handed governance. Several embassies closed operations in Colombo, some because of cost-cutting. The European Union fell flat in its effort to bring about a change in the government’s human rights policies by withdrawing a preferential tariff agreement known as GSP+; the Sri Lankan government rejected the EU’s demands and pressed ahead without the important trade relationship. Sri Lanka turned increasingly to China, Iran, and Pakistan for aid, financial assistance, trade, and infrastructure investment.

Thailand

Armed clashes between anti-government protesters and state security forces resulted in 91 deaths and more than 1,800 injuries, a toll that deepened Thailand's debilitating five-year-old political crisis. Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva invoked an emergency decree to contain the protests and employed its discretionary powers to sharply curb press freedom, which included far-ranging Internet censorship.

Two foreign journalists—Reuters cameraman Hiro Muramoto and Italian freelance photographer Fabio Polenghi—were among the fatalities, while at least nine other reporters were injured in crossfire between troops and protesters. In April and May, areas of Bangkok became armed combat zones as supporters of self-exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra resorted to violence in their bid to topple Abhisit's elected government. The conflict was rooted in Thaksin's ouster in a 2006 military coup and subsequent court decisions that disbanded two of his political parties.

In a special report issued in July, CPJ faulted both the government and the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) protest group for engaging in lethal recklessness that contributed to the deaths and injuries of reporters. CPJ found the government had done little to investigate the shootings and had obstructed private investigations launched by concerned news organizations, foreign embassies, and family members.

Muramoto was shot while covering the first armed clashes, on April 10, in Bangkok's old royal quarter. While positioned with military forces that evening, the journalist had captured on film a grenade attack that killed and severely wounded a number of troops. He was later seen on the side of the UDD's red-shirted protesters, four of whom were photographed by the local *Daily News* carrying his limp body away from the front lines at around 9 p.m.

Reuters' own investigation found that Muramoto "was shot almost certainly by a high-velocity bullet fired at street level while standing in a street between Thai troops and red-shirt protesters." A summary of Reuters' findings reviewed by CPJ said that Muramoto "was not shot at close range" and that "both troops and protesters had high-velocity weapons at the time of Hiro's death and there were casualties on both sides that night."

In November, the government acknowledged that security forces could have killed Muramoto and said it would conduct an investigation. "Since there was possible involvement by government officers, we have to start from square one by letting police investigate further," Tharit Pengdit,

director general of the Department of Special Investigation, told a news conference.

Polenghi was killed by gunfire on the morning of May 19 while reporting on military operations to crack down on UDD demonstrators who had erected a barricaded protest site in a luxury shopping and hotel district in the capital. Polenghi was wearing a blue helmet with the word “Press” written across the front and back, and a green armband clearly indicating that he was a working journalist at the time of the shooting.

Troops appeared to be firing indiscriminately in the area, according to Bradley Cox, a documentary filmmaker who was working near Polenghi and was wounded himself by gunfire that morning. “I don’t know who shot me or Fabio, but if the military was trying to shoot red shirts, there was no one around us,” Cox told CPJ. “Soldiers were firing at anything or anybody.”

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Using emergency decree, government blocks access to thousands of websites.
- » CPJ faults government, protesters for lethal violence against media.

KEY STATISTIC

2

Journalists killed during violent clashes between security forces and protesters in Bangkok.

Other journalists sustained life-threatening injuries. France 24 contributor Nelson Rand was struck by multiple gunshots to the wrist, leg, and abdomen while covering a battle between troops and protesters on May 14 outside of the city’s Lumpini Park. Video footage showed that the gunfire came from a position where troops were stationed at the time. Two UDD protesters drove Rand on a motorcycle to a nearby hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery.

Chandler Vandergrift, a freelance reporter on assignment for the *Toronto Star*, suffered near-fatal injuries after being hit by grenade shrapnel in the back and head on the afternoon of May 19. The journalist was positioned with a group of soldiers at the time of the grenade attack and fell immediately unconscious from his injuries, he told CPJ. He said that it took six weeks for some of the two dozen shrapnel wounds on his back to stop bleeding, and that the grenade’s blast left him completely deaf in his left ear. Vandergrift said he believed that the grenade that hit him was fired by black-clad armed protesters, whom he perceived to be targeting troops, not journalists.

On May 13, *New York Times* reporter Thomas Fuller narrowly escaped injury while interviewing a rogue soldier who led the UDD's armed guards. The soldier was shot in the head and killed in mid-conversation along the perimeter of the protest site. According to his *New York Times* report, Fuller was standing just a couple of feet away when he heard a "loud bang" and the fatigues-wearing soldier fell to the ground.

On June 7, CPJ sent a letter to Abhisit to express concerns about the deteriorating security situation for journalists covering the conflict. Sek Wanamethee, deputy chief of mission at the Thailand Embassy in Washington, said in a written reply that broad investigations were under way into the deadly violence, including a quasi-independent fact-finding committee investigating the fighting led by former Attorney General Khanit na Nakhon.

But doubts emerged about the committee led by Khanit. He was quoted in the local press on June 12 as saying that "there will be no pointing fingers in the [committee's] work plan" and that "placing blame was less important than promoting forgiveness." CPJ noted in a statement that past government-appointed committees tasked with investigating alleged state-sponsored rights abuses in Thailand had consistently failed to result in prosecutions.

By year's end, no one had been held accountable for the deaths or injuries. CPJ's investigation found instances of official obstruction of privately led inquiries into both the Muramoto and Polenghi killings. CPJ sources said the military refused to make available for interviews the soldiers known to be near Muramoto at the time of the shooting. The government also failed to disclose closed-circuit footage showing activities in the area where the journalist was killed.

Polenghi's sister, Elisabetta, told CPJ she felt threatened after meeting in July with security officials tasked with investigating her brother's death. She said that after she presented new video evidence of his death to the police Department of Special Investigation, agents arrested the UDD supporter who provided her with the video footage. On July 30, CPJ held a joint press conference with Elisabetta Polenghi in Bangkok to urge the government to focus its efforts on investigating the shooting.

After imposing a state of emergency on April 7, Abhisit's government used its discretionary powers to close down a satellite-television news station known as D-Station, along with at least 25 community radio stations, four print publications, and thousands of websites and pages aligned with the UDD. The shuttering of the four print publications, including *Voice of Taksin* and *Red News*, represented the first government-ordered closing of print media since military rule in the mid-1970s.

Government officials justified censorship on national security grounds,

claiming UDD-aligned media had incited hatred that contributed to the unrest. In comments and speeches, Abhisit pointed to a live D-Station broadcast in which a protester called for the prime minister's assassination, and told journalists on April 25 that the UDD had used provincial community radio stations as "command centers" for mobilizing supporters rather than broadcasting news.

The crackdown extended beyond UDD-aligned media to independent news sites and opinion forums on the Internet, often on the grounds that they published material critical of the monarchy. The extent of the censorship was difficult to track because the emergency decree exempted the government from issuing written orders to Internet service providers. In a December report, Thailand's iLaw Project said the government ordered the blocking of 38,868 websites and Web pages for publishing content critical of the country's royal family. In all, the group said, the government ordered roughly 44,000 web addresses blocked during 2010.

Thailand's royal family was shielded from public criticism by some of the world's strictest *lese majeste* laws, which carried possible three- to 15-year prison terms for convictions. On June 15, the cabinet approved the creation of a new cyber-crime agency tasked specifically with stamping out online criticism of the monarchy, Agence France-Presse reported. The government also posted billboards with a phone number urging Internet users to report "improper" websites to authorities.

Certain journalists were targeted. Chiranuch Premchaiporn, editor of the independent *Prachatai* news website, was charged in March with alleged violations of the 2007 Computer Crime Act. The charges stemmed from comments posted by a reader that were critical of Queen Sirikit. As part of the state-of-emergency crackdown, authorities blocked local access to *Prachatai* in April. The site was moved to servers outside of the country, and an alternate site became accessible later in the year.

Chiranuch was arrested a second time, on September 24, as she arrived at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport after returning from an international Internet freedom conference in Hungary. Her arrest stemmed from comments posted to *Prachatai* in 2008 that allegedly violated computer crime and *lese majeste* laws, according to a posting on *Prachatai* that day. Free on bail in late year, she faced a possible sentence of 50 years in prison on multiple charges related to content posted to her website. Her trial on the first set of charges was scheduled to begin in February 2011.

Several other politically oriented websites—those devoted to political prisoners and censorship, as well as the document disclosure site WikiLeaks—were blocked by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology. Visitors calling up the addresses of the censored sites found

either a Thai-language message citing reasons of national security or a disingenuous error message. WikiLeaks was blocked in August, apparently in response to the site's publication of a comprehensive ministry list of websites and pages it had blocked.

With the pervasive censorship of websites, many Internet users gravitated toward social networking sites such as Facebook to monitor news and engage in online political discussions. Even that space wasn't safe for unfettered political debate: In May, authorities arrested Wipas Raksakulthai, a 37-year-old businessman, for posting comments on his Facebook page that were considered offensive to the monarchy.

Vietnam

Vietnam targeted online journalists in a clampdown on dissent ahead of a 2011 Communist Party Congress at which top government appointments and policies were to be determined. At least five journalistic bloggers were among dozens of activists arrested on national security-related charges, including "spreading propaganda against the state" and "abusing democratic freedoms." The government maintained some of the world's strictest Internet controls, which included blocks on Facebook and numerous Vietnamese-language websites, including those maintained by the exile-run, pro-democracy Viet Tan and human rights organizations critical of the government. Independent analysts found evidence of official involvement in hacking attacks on critical blogs and websites.

Two politically oriented blogs, *Blogosin* (Housekeeper) and *Bauxite Vietnam*, came under particular attack, according to The Associated Press and Agence France-Presse. *Bauxite Vietnam*, a site established to protest a controversial China-led bauxite mining project in Vietnam's Central Highlands region, came under distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) attacks beginning in December 2009, according to the reports. DDOS attacks are a form of censorship by information overload, in which hundreds of thousands of computers are coordinated to send or demand data from a single website, causing its connection to the Internet to choke up or the server to crash. After several attempts to restore the popular blog, the site's administrators eventually moved it to the internationally hosted Blogspot and WordPress platforms. The bauxite issue is considered sensitive because of the large number of Chinese workers brought in to work in the mines, which are situated in a strategically important and environmentally significant area. Government critics have portrayed the agreement as bowing to Chinese interests.

After *Blogosin* was attacked in February, the blog's writer, Truong Huy San, who wrote under the pen name Huy Duc, posted a message on a newly created home page to say that he would stop writing to focus on personal matters. A former reporter with the state-run *Saigon Tiep Thi* (Saigon Marketing) daily newspaper, San had been dismissed from his position in August 2009 after posting entries critical of government policy on his personal blog.

In March, in an effort to help customers detect malicious software, experts at Google and the computer security company McAfee reported that malware had been used to spy on dissidents and disable their websites through DDOS attacks. "Specifically, these attacks have tried to squelch opposition to bauxite mining efforts in Vietnam, an important and emotionally charged issue in the country," Neel Mehta wrote in a Google Online Security blog entry on March 30. McAfee investigations pointed to possible government complicity in the attacks. "We believe that the perpetrators may have political motivations and may have some allegiance to the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam," George Kurtz, McAfee's chief technology officer, wrote in March on his company's blog.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- ▣ In run-up to Communist Party Congress, authorities clamp down on Internet.
- ▣ Critical blogs targeted in hacking attacks; government complicity seen.

5

Online journalists imprisoned on December 1, reflecting crackdown on Internet commentary.

Independent researchers found that one of the most widely used Vietnamese software programs—VPSKeys, a utility allowing Vietnamese characters to be entered on a standard keyboard—had been infected with malware that enabled remote groups to track the user's keystrokes. The malware also hijacked computers, making them part of a "botnet" that could be remotely controlled from afar, according to McAfee.

Authorities denied involvement in the malware or other cyber-attacks. In June, however, the Hanoi People's Committee, which oversees the city's administration, ordered the installation of monitoring software in public computers, including those in Internet cafés, across the capital city. Few details were disclosed, but Hanoi, where Communist Party control is strongest, was seen as the logical place to launch a monitoring program. The order followed a 2009 government test of surveillance software in 300

Internet cafés in Hanoi.

CPJ's annual worldwide census of imprisoned journalists identified five Vietnamese bloggers jailed for their journalism. Pham Thanh Nghien, an online writer, was sentenced in January to four years in prison and three years of house arrest on charges of spreading antistate material. The court ruling singled out an online article in which she criticized public officials for siphoning off compensation funds intended for victims of fishermen killed by Chinese maritime patrols in 2007.

Authorities also lodged antistate charges against Pham Minh Hoang, a university mathematics professor and political blogger arrested in Ho Chi Minh City on August 13. Authorities said at a press conference that Hoang had been charged under Article 79 of the penal code for activities aimed at overthrowing the government. The charges filed against him, which were pending in late year, cited 29 blog entries written under the penname Phan Kien Quoc. He blogged frequently on issues related to corruption, the environment, and government policies toward China.

On October 18, Phan Thanh Hai, a political blogger who wrote under the penname Anh Ba Saigon (Saigon Brother Three), was arrested and provisionally detained for four months while authorities conducted an investigation. Hai's blog often touched on issues considered sensitive by the Vietnamese authorities, including a scandal at state-run shipbuilder Vinashin, maritime and territorial disputes with China, and the controversial bauxite mining project in the country's Central Highlands region.

Le Nguyen Huong Tra, a blogger who wrote under the pen name Do Long Girl, was taken into custody at her Ho Chi Minh City home on October 23. Her blog had developed a following by mixing humor and political analysis. Tra's arrest stemmed from entries that were critical of Deputy Minister of Public Security Nguyen Khanh Toan. She faced possible criminal defamation charges, which carried a prison sentence of seven years.

Blogger Nguyen Van Hai, also known as Dieu Cay, remained behind bars when CPJ conducted its census on December 1, despite the expiration of his prison term in October. Hai was detained on trumped-up tax evasion charges in April 2008 and sentenced to two and a half years in prison. His popular blog was frequently critical of the government's policies toward China. Officials said they would continue to hold Hai while they investigated the charges against him of disseminating anti-government propaganda, according to news reports.

The crackdown on online dissent came as Internet penetration grew to 24.2 million users, representing about 28 percent of the population, according to the International Telecommunication Union. Vietnam was in

a situation similar to that of China: With an eye toward economic growth, the government was committed to improving Internet access even as it maintained strict control of content. The government used three main techniques to control cyberspace: blocking and filtering; hacker attacks, including DDOS attacks; and arrest and intimidation of citizen journalists and bloggers.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, speaking on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Hanoi in November, expressed Washington's concerns about the crackdown. Because her critical remarks were not translated by an official interpreter, they were not carried on national TV or in any state-run media.

Print and broadcast media remained under tight state control and generally shied away from reporting on sensitive political issues such as the competition between Communist Party factions ahead of the January 2011 Congress. The Congress was a matter of intrigue as a conservative, security-minded faction was rivaling Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and his technocratic clique.

Top editorial staff positions at newspapers, radio, and television stations were filled by their sponsoring government organs; all print and broadcast media were subject to Ministry of Information and Communications' censorship. Certain media outlets were known to be aligned with competing Communist Party factions, and their news coverage often pumped up the credentials and activities of their preferred candidates.

Attacks and developments throughout the region

Bangladesh

- » An unidentified man threatened photojournalist Shahidul Alam on March 26 in the capital, Dhaka, after the photographer objected to the government shutting down his exhibition of photos of extrajudicial killings, according to international news reports. The man told a guard at Alam's gallery, Drik Picture Library, that the photographer "would meet his death on the streets, by bullets," Drik said in a statement.
- » The Supreme Court sentenced Mahmudur Rahman, editor and part owner of the Bengali-language daily *Amar Desh*, to a six-month prison term on August 19, according to international news reports. The court said the paper denigrated its reputation in an April article accusing it of bias toward the ruling Awami League. Rahman, a former energy adviser for the opposition Bangladesh National Party, was arrested in June, when 200 or more police officers shut down the paper's Dhaka publishing facilities. More than 20 defamation charges against Rahman, filed by members or allies of the ruling Awami League, including current energy adviser, Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, were pending in late year.

Cambodia

- » Hang Chakra, editor and publisher of the pro-opposition daily *Khmer Machas Srok*, was pardoned as part of a Cambodian New Year amnesty and released from prison on April 13, three months short of completing his one-year prison term for "criminal disinformation" in articles about government corruption, news reports said. After his release, he told local journalists he would continue publishing the newspaper, although it suspended operations in June for financial reasons, local news reports said. A relaunch was scheduled for late year, the *Phnom Penh Post* reported.

Fiji

- » The military regime barred criticism of leader Frank Bainimarama's decision not to call national elections. Bainimarama had pledged to restore democracy after he took power in a 2006 coup. The government monitored newsrooms and maintained heavy censorship

under so-called emergency regulations that were imposed in April 2009 after courts challenged the legitimacy of Bainimarama's leadership.

- » In June, the government issued a Media Industry Development Decree that barred any news content deemed as being against national interests or creating communal discord, news reports said. The decree, which took effect in September and replaced the prior set of censorship rules, required that 90 percent of media company shareholders be citizens of Fiji. The ownership clause appeared to target the outspoken *Fiji Times*, owned by an Australian subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. The decree established a state-appointed six-person regulatory authority and a one-person tribunal to monitor news media. Penalties included fines of up to 25,000 Fiji dollars (US\$13,000) and prison terms of up to two years, news reports said.

India

- » Anti-press violence spiked in the eastern state of Orissa in early year, according to media support groups, which documented 12 assaults and six cases of threats and intimidation between January and July. Three attacks had been reported in all of 2009. In some cases, the victims accused members of the Central Industrial Security Force and Indian Reserve Battalion of being involved. In three assault cases, police were present but did not respond, support groups and local media said. The attacks were linked to a range of sensitive issues, including Maoist uprisings, government corruption, and student protests.
- » About 3,000 people stormed the premises of the Delhi-based television news channel Headlines Today on July 16. The attackers, members of the Hindu nationalist organization Rashtirya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), destroyed the building's lobby, blocked all exits for two hours, and assaulted a camera operator, according to news reports and media support organizations. Headlines Today stories had recently accused RSS members of involvement in bombings across the country.
- » Also on July 16, in an apparently unrelated attack, members of the far-right nationalist party Shiv Sena ransacked the studio of TV channel *Zee 24 Taas* in Kolhapur, western Maharashtra state. The attack, which injured five, came during the middle of a live broadcast on a border dispute with the neighboring state of Karnataka, news reports said. Eleven assailants surrendered to police the following day and were released on bail.

- » Vijay Pratap Singh, senior correspondent for the daily *Indian Express*, died on July 20 from injuries received from a bomb blast a week earlier in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. The blast occurred during an interview the journalist was conducting with Nand Gopal Gupta, minister for institutional finance. The explosive had been concealed in a motorized bike outside Gupta's house, news reports said. Police arrested two members of the local Samajwadi Party in connection with the blast, according to Indian media outlets.
- » Newspapers and TV news channels in India's northeastern state of Manipur shut down for a day on July 22. The All Manipur Working Journalists' Union and the Manipur Hill Journalists' Union organized the protest to publicize threats against Singlianmang Guite, correspondent for *The Sangai Express*. A local militant group had reportedly threatened Guite.
- » Strict enforcement of curfews by security forces in cities across Indian-controlled Kashmir greatly hindered press coverage. On several occasions, local publications and regional TV channels were paralyzed as employees were unable to leave their homes without risk of police obstruction, according to local media reports and journalists' organizations. Sanam Ajaz, assistant managing director of the private JK Networks, was assaulted by police in Srinagar, capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir, on September 15. Police appeared to disregard Ajaz's curfew pass, according to local news outlets *Rising Kashmir* and *Kashmir Media Service*. The same month, BBC Urdu service journalist Riaz Masroor was stopped and beaten by police as he was trying to obtain his curfew pass. He suffered a fractured arm, the BBC reported.
- » Police in southern Karnataka state lodged criminal charges in December against *Tehelka* magazine reporter K.K. Shahina in connection with an article questioning the arrest of a political activist on terrorism allegations, according to Shahina and local news reports. Shahina, based in neighboring Kerala state, was charged with intimidating witnesses based on the interviews she conducted for the December 4 piece, "Why is this man still in prison?" She told CPJ that police followed her as she was conducting interviews for the article. The charges carry a maximum seven-year prison term. She was free in late year.

Malaysia

- » In June, the Home Ministry banned a series of political cartoons critical of Prime Minister Najib Razak's administration under the Printing Presses and Publications Act, saying they were "prejudicial to public

order,” according to news reports. The series, by satirist Zulkifli Anwar Ulhaque (popularly known as Zunar), included cartoons that appeared on the independent news website *Malaysiakini* from 2005 to 2009 and in *Isu Dalam Kartun*, a monthly magazine, news reports said. On July 26, Zunar and *Malaysiakini* filed for a judicial review of the ban, according to local press freedom group the Centre for Independent Journalism. The case was pending in late year.

- » Zunar was then arrested on September 24, just hours before the launch of his book of political cartoons, *Cartoon-o-phobia*. Held on suspicion of violating Malaysia’s Sedition Act, he was released on bail the next day. The cartoonist told CPJ that police served a search warrant at his office and seized 66 copies of the book. The case was pending in late year. In June, the government banned three other compilations of his political cartoons. Zunar filed his own lawsuit, pending in late year, challenging the censorship orders.
- » Blogger Irwan Abdul Rahman was charged in September with “intent to hurt” in connection with a satirical entry on his blog, *Nose4news*, that made fun of Malaysia’s state-run power company Tenaga (TNB), according to news accounts. The article, titled “TNB to sue WWF over Earth Hour,” joked that Tenaga might take legal action against the World Wildlife Fund’s annual energy-saving initiative. The blogger, who is also lifestyle editor for the *Malay Mail* newspaper, could face up to a year in prison and a fine of 50,000 ringgit (US\$16,000) if found guilty under the charge, which is part of the Communications and Multimedia Act of 1998. The case was pending in late year.

Mongolia

- » Court officers raided the daily *Nuigmiin Toli* in Ulaanbaatar in August, seizing the paper’s computers, according to local media support group Globe International. The Chingeltei District Court ordered the seizure after the paper reportedly failed to comply with the terms of a December 2009 sentence in a defamation case. The court had ordered the paper to print a retraction and apology for a September 2009 letter to the editor from citizens of Bayan-Ölgii, in Mongolia’s far western Kazakh province. The letter had alleged corruption among local government officials.

Singapore

- » In March, the New York Times Co. apologized to Singapore’s prime minister and his two predecessors for a February 15 article describing

them as a political dynasty, according to news reports. The company agreed to pay 60,000 Singaporean dollars (US\$42,600) to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong; 50,000 Singaporean dollars (US\$35,500) to his father, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's founder and first prime minister; and another 50,000 Singaporean dollars (US\$35,500) to Goh Chok Tong, who served as prime minister between father and son, according to The Associated Press. The article appeared in the Times-owned *International Herald Tribune*.

- » British author Alan Shadrake was sentenced in November to six weeks in prison on contempt-of-court charges stemming from his 2010 book, *Once a Jolly Hangman: Singapore Justice in the Dock*, which criticized the country's use of capital punishment. Shadrake, 76, was also fined 20,000 Singapore dollars (US\$15,400) and ordered to pay 55,000 Singapore dollars (US \$42,000) in legal costs, according to news reports. High Court Judge Quentin Loh said he imposed the harsh penalty in order to send "a signal to those who hope to profit from controversy," *The Wall Street Journal* reported. Shadrake, based in Malaysia, was arrested in July when he visited Singapore to launch his book. Shadrake was free in late year pending appeal.



Europe and
Central Asia

Europe and Central Asia

ANALYSIS 177

Blending the old methods of repression with newer, subtler forms of censorship, authoritarian leaders and their allies are suppressing information on the Runet. Do their tactics signal the future of Internet control worldwide? By Nina Ognianova and Danny O'Brien

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Section break: A Moscow protester denounces a savage attack on Russian journalist Oleg Kashin. (Reuters/Mikhail Voskresensky) Analysis: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev is a blogger, but critics say his government has acted in ways to suppress online voices. (Reuters)

On the Runet, Old-School Repression Meets New

by Nina Ognianova and Danny O'Brien

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has often talked about the importance of a free press and free Internet, telling reporters before his election that the Web “guarantees the independence of mass media.” He explicitly tied the two together in his first State of the Union address in November 2008, declaring that “freedom of speech should be backed up by technological innovation” and that no government official “can obstruct discussion on the Internet.”

Even as Medvedev made these statements, others were questioning whether simply permitting the existence of the Internet would allow online journalists to work without state-sponsored interference. In a study from the same year titled, “The Web That Failed,” Floriana Fossato and John Lloyd of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism noted that “an unpleasant feeling of vulnerability is spreading among bloggers and advocacy groups active in the Russian Internet.”

Two years later, the Russian online media is not subjected to direct central government censorship in the style of China’s Great Firewall; ordinary users have not endured the high-tech throttling of traffic employed by Iranian authorities. Nonetheless, that uneasy feeling has continued to grow, Fossato said. “The Russian authorities have made abundantly clear in the last few years that direct censorship is not an option for them,” she told CPJ. But every other tool is being used, she said, “from the opaque wording of extremism legislation to hacking and the control of Internet service providers.”

Even online writers willing to accept these controls, Fossato said, have become alarmed by recent attacks targeting prominent, mainstream bloggers such as Oleg Kashin, who was brutally beaten in October. Yet the violence is not so new, CPJ research shows. Online journalists in Russia and throughout the region—whose work appears on the Russian-language

Internet known as the Runet—have faced physical intimidation, attacks, and threats for far longer than has been widely noted in either Moscow or the West.

Throughout the region, authoritarian leaders and their allies have effectively blended the old tactics of repression with newer, subtler forms of censorship. Physical violence threatens Internet journalists in Russia and the former Soviet republics as deeply as it does independent reporters working in other media. Kashin, for example, reported on the same controversial highway project that newspaper editor Mikhail Beketov covered when he, too, was beaten two years earlier. Governments are applying to online media the same restrictive laws that have long controlled traditional media, imposing onerous registration requirements and severe content limits.

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Intermittent, untraceable disabling of independent media websites.

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Combine those old, well-developed tactics with the targeted use of technological attacks—such as the intermittent but untraceable disabling of independent media websites—and you have a form of Internet control that is elusive and hard to combat. “The invisible hand of the online censors is, I think, more effective than what China is doing. They’ve been very successful in silencing independent voices without attracting international attention,” said Vadim Isakov, a former journalist for Agence France-Presse and contributor to the Global Voices RuNet Echo project, which tracks developments on the Russian Internet. “Nobody knows how far or where this could go.”

In a 2010 report, Ron Deibert and Rafal Rohozinski, principal investigators at OpenNet Initiative, a global academic project that monitors filtering and surveillance, went so far as to describe Internet controls in the Commonwealth of Independent States—the regional organization composed of the former Soviet states—as having evolved “several generations ahead” of those used in other regions of the world. Runet controls are not only mirroring past oppression, the authors said, they’re foreshadowing the future of Internet control worldwide.

The repression of Runet journalism evolved as a simple extension of the controls exerted on traditional news media. In Russia, even though the

constitution guarantees freedom of expression and the press, a number of laws have long restricted those rights. Defamation laws and an anti-extremism statute—twice amended to constrict the boundaries of journalism—have now been extended to the authors of Web content. Particularly in the Russian provinces, criminal prosecution of Internet journalists is often coupled with other forms of pressure, including intimidation, assault, and murder.

In August 2009, prosecutors in southern Siberia opened a criminal defamation case against Mikhail Afanasyev, editor of the online magazine *Novy Fokus*, in retaliation for a commentary challenging the government's response to a deadly explosion at a hydroelectric plant. The indictment said the journalist had "knowingly distributed false information that slandered the honor, dignity, and business reputation of the regional authorities and plant management." Authorities dropped the charges under international pressure, but a month later unknown assailants beat Afanasyev, leaving him with a broken jaw and head injuries.

The editor of the North Caucasus news website *Ingushetiya*, Roza Mal-sagova, was forced into exile in August 2008 after being criminally charged with "extremist activity" and then threatened, harassed, and beaten. The publisher, Magomed Yevloyev, was fatally shot while in police custody the same month; one person was prosecuted on a relatively minor charge of negligent homicide despite evidence that the killing was premeditated and politically motivated. A Moscow court ordered the site's closure on "extremism" charges, but the staff has continued to operate the site via a U.S.-hosted service.



Throughout the region, new media are frequently forced to endure the same bureaucratic and restrictive registration requirements that beset their predecessors. Article 2 of Russia’s Law on Mass Media, for instance, was expanded so that restrictions on traditional media were imposed on registered websites as well. Although websites are not obligated to register, many online journalists feel compelled to do so in order to undertake basic reportorial tasks such as attending press conferences, covering political events, and interviewing official sources.

Elsewhere in the region, mandatory media registration has become a powerful weapon of control, effectively outlawing individual voices online unless they comply with draconian registration requirements—impositions that are even more disproportionate when applied to individual bloggers with few resources or to those exchanging opinions with a small audience on social networking sites.

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*Mandatory registration becomes a powerful
weapon of control.*

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In 2009, Kazakhstan passed restrictive legislation equating all Internet sites—including personal blogs, chat rooms, and social networking sites—with traditional media. Those regulations criminalize defamation and allow for the seizure of editorial material, the blocking of broadcasts, and the suspension or closure of media outlets. Internet users wishing to remain within the law found themselves in the position of either remaining passive consumers or jumping through all the registration hoops intended for major newspapers just to start their own blogs.

Journalists describe the law as a ticking bomb that will go off at politically sensitive times such as elections. The government, for example, has already announced that it is compiling “blacklists” of “destructive” websites. Tamara Kaleyeva, president of the local press freedom group Adil Soz, told CPJ that she tried without success to get an official explanation as to what constituted a “destructive” site. The penalties awaiting such sites are also unspecified.

Kazakhstan’s attempts to expand media control to the Internet mimic those of Belarus, where President Aleksandr Lukashenko signed legislation equating all Internet content with traditional news media. In February, Lukashenko signed a decree that gave government agencies wide-ranging authority to block access to online information they deem extremist. The decree required all providers to register servers, personal computers, and

other “devices used to connect to the Internet,” and to collect the personal details of Web surfers.

As in Kazakhstan, Belarus established a new Internet regulator, the Operational Analytical Center. Reporting directly to the president, the center has a mandate to monitor the online correspondences and activities of Belarusian citizens, including their browsing history, ostensibly to “protect information containing state secrets” from “leaking through technical channels,” the independent news website *Charter 97* reported. Authorities did not specify what type of information would be considered a “state secret.”

Even with such wide-ranging legal powers, Eurasian nations are using extra-legal censorship techniques—notably the targeted and largely non-attributable sabotage of website connectivity.

Event-specific blocking of selected Internet sources has become a common tool for most Eurasian nations. Over the past four years, CPJ has documented such blocking in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Armenia, Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. These blocks are temporary and triggered by sensitive events such as elections or ethnic conflict, or by the appearance of critical online reporting that is considered embarrassing to a particular government official.

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*Even in repressed states, circumvention tools
are rarely used.*

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In these cases, OpenNet analyst Rohozinski explained, official fingerprints are hard to conclusively identify. “Event-specific blocking is meant to make sites seem like they are simply unavailable or subject to technical faults,” he said. When opposition sites went down in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, he noted, OpenNet had to first invest considerable effort to eliminate benign infrastructure failures.

Journalists have found ways of circumventing censorship. After years of official suppression of their print version, staffers at Kazakhstan’s *Respublika* newspaper moved much of their material onto the Web in 2008. Still, the troubles continued. “We started placing more and more content online, but our website only functioned normally for a couple of months,” multimedia editor Anastasiya Novikova told CPJ. First, the website was periodically disabled by denial-of-service, or DOS, attacks.

(A DOS attack prevents a website from functioning normally by overloading its host server with external communications requests, the volume of which the server is unable to handle.) Then the website became inaccessible in Kazakhstan. The country’s main Internet provider, Kazakhtelecom, did not respond to CPJ’s requests for an explanation; the government claimed it had nothing to do with the blocking.

Respublika staff fought back, using proxy servers and alternative Web addresses, uploading content on unblocked social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and sending e-mails and brochures to readers to direct them to the publication’s content. But *Respublika*’s proactive response requires that its readers have the patience and knowledge to circumvent the technical blocks in their way. In October, Harvard’s Berkman Center for Internet & Society estimated that circumvention tools are employed by fewer than 3 percent of Internet users worldwide, even in countries that practice pervasive blocking. In order to break the blockade, sites like *Respublika* need a substantial change in attitude, both at home and abroad.

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Repression on the Runet has yet to attract international attention.

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Recognizing this, *Respublika* took the lead in forming a new advocacy group, For Free Internet, which is trying to combat Kazakhstan’s plans for Internet controls. In May, representatives of the group filed dozens of claims in local courts demanding that the Ministry of Information ensure unrestricted Internet access. By September, the courts had dismissed all of the claims. The ministry’s defense was simple. It said it does not “have the right to demand from Internet providers that they give access to one or another source,” Adil Soz reported. Much as it did when *Respublika*’s site went dark, the government seemed to shrug and pass responsibility to a third party—one that was sure to do its bidding.

Similarly, regional lawmakers have tried to present their approach to the Internet as “hands-off.” Internet journalists have only to follow existing news media rules, after all, such as laws on defamation, extremism, and registration. But in a politicized environment, such laws are applied arbitrarily; behind the scenes, the online press suffers from illegal attacks that occur with impunity. Sites such as *Respublika* are not explicitly censored by the state; instead, they suffer from intermittent and untraceable denial-of-service attacks, or a decision made by an Internet service provider ostensibly independent of the government. Accidents befall Web servers,

just as mysterious, unsolved crimes of violence silence the region's online journalists.

While blunter strategies catch the eye of Western governments and media, Runet crackdowns attract far less attention. Thousands of news articles in 2010 traced crackdowns in Iran and China, but Google News recorded fewer than 80 stories on Runet censorship. Given CPJ research showing ongoing violence against online reporters, intimidation of Web journals, and technological attacks on independent websites, the dearth of news on Runet censorship shows not the absence of repression but its insidious effectiveness. Without international attention and condemnation, these dangerous tactics are likely to become entrenched in the region and to spread elsewhere in the world.

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Summaries in this chapter were researched and written by Nina Ognianova, CPJ's Europe and Central Asia program coordinator, along with CPJ Research Associate Muzaffar Suleymanov and freelance writer Alex Lupis.

Armenia

As his government strengthened ties with Russia, President Serzh Sargsyan had to quell lingering domestic discontent over electoral fraud and economic woes, particularly in the construction and mining industries. New legislation granted regulators broad new powers to award and revoke licenses, while putting severe limits on the number of provincial broadcast licenses. Self-censorship remained widespread in the media, as lawlessness curbed the activities of journalists, human rights defenders, and opposition leaders.

In August, Moscow and Yerevan signed an agreement extending to 2044 Russia's lease on a military base outside the northern city of Gyumri, according to international press reports. The agreement offered Armenia new security guarantees, while lifting restrictions on the movements of Russian forces and fighter jets. The Sargsyan administration also agreed to pay Moscow US\$5 billion to build two nuclear reactors in Armenia, The Associated Press reported.

At home, Sargsyan's government faced a restive population battered by the global recession and angered anew by electoral problems. A special parliamentary election in Yerevan in January was marred by reports of ballot-stuffing and harassment of opposition supporters, according to international press reports, a reminder of the irregularities that international observers documented during the 2008 presidential vote. The administration sought to control the news narrative by suppressing public protests, imprisoning opposition activists, and adopting restrictive regulations.

The most drastic step occurred in June when parliament passed and the president signed into law amendments to the Law on Television and Radio that tightened control of the country's influential broadcast media, according to local and international press reports. The government tried to deflect attention from the restrictive amendments by embedding them into a package of measures meant to move radio and television stations from analog to digital signals. Sargsyan ignored domestic and international protests over the restrictions, which are seen as benefiting his Republican

Party as it approaches parliamentary elections set for 2012.

The amendments enable government regulators to grant or revoke licenses without explanation, as well as impose programming restrictions that would confine some stations to narrow themes such as culture, education, and sports, according to news reports. Analysts said the changes would provide the government legal cover to keep the popular news outlet A1+ off the air. Armenian authorities revoked A1+'s broadcasting license in 2002—after the station aired critical news reports about President Robert Kocharian—and then denied a dozen subsequent license applications. The government has essentially ignored a June 2008 ruling by the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights that said authorities improperly revoked the A1+ license without adequate explanation. A1+ continued to operate as an online outlet. The government claimed domestic Internet penetration was approaching 50 percent, although independent estimates were much lower.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » New broadcast law gives regulators broad powers to revoke TV licenses.
- » Gala TV, a rare critical broadcaster, faces array of government pressures.

1 Number of digital television licenses the government will grant per region. The plan will cut diversity.

Another amendment stipulates that only one digital television license would be issued for each of the 10 regions outside the capital. The restriction was seen by some as a means to silence Gyumri-based Gala television, the one domestic station that continued to broadcast criticism of the government.

The National Commission on Television and Radio—whose members are appointed by the president—announced in July that it was seeking applications for the new digital broadcasting frequencies, according to press reports. Independent journalists said they believed the process would be politicized. “Digitalization is supposed to increase the choices people have on TV, but here the authorities are using it to eliminate competition and have only one loyal station per region,” Gala owner Vahan Khachatrian told CPJ. “These are all the consequences of the fraudulent elections because the government is not legitimate and cannot appeal to the people, so the only thing left is to increase control over society.” Authorities were

expecting to announce the results of the application process in 2011.

Officials in Gyumri, the country's second-largest city, escalated their campaign of harassment against Gala during 2010. Tax officials froze the station's bank accounts, customs officers seized equipment bound for the station, and authorities pressured businesses to stop advertising on the station. Authorities have harassed the station since 2007 in retaliation for broadcasting speeches by Levon Ter-Petrossian, the former president turned opposition leader.

The amendments positioned Sargsyan to maintain control over the country's docile television and radio stations, most of which were owned by pro-government politicians and businessmen. Propagandistic state media retained important financial subsidies from various government budgets and privileged access to official information. While print and online media were more pluralistic, their reach was limited to a primarily urban and educated audience.

One positive legal change occurred in May when parliament amended the penal and administrative codes to decriminalize defamation. Sargsyan later signed the measure, although it was considered largely symbolic because the law was rarely used to harass journalists and authorities retained many other levers of influence.

Throughout the year, police officers routinely harassed, assaulted, and arrested journalists, according to local press reports and media analysts. Prosecutors regularly colluded in this practice by failing to investigate police officers, even filing charges on occasion against journalists who protested abuses, CPJ research showed.

On February 24, a police officer assaulted photojournalist Gagik Shamshian, who worked for several pro-opposition newspapers, as he was taking pictures of officials outside the prosecutor general's office in Yerevan, according to local and international press reports. Shamshian filed a complaint with the police, who identified the officer from the journalist's photos and from a security camera that captured him punching the photojournalist in the face several times, news reports said. But the police dropped the assault charges against the alleged assailant and in April charged Shamshian with filing a "false" complaint, punishable by up to three years in prison, according to local and international news reports. Police offered no explanation but dropped the case in late year.

On May 31, police arrested three journalists covering a gathering of opposition activists at Liberty Square in Yerevan, according to news reports. Police arrested Ani Gevorgian and Syuzanna Pogosian of the pro-opposition daily *Haykakan Zhamanak*, as well as Lilit Tadevosian of the Yerevan-based daily *Hayq*, according to *Haykakan Zhamanak* Director Anna

Hakobian. Authorities released Tadevosian and Pogosian later that day, but they charged the 23-year-old Gevorgian with assaulting a police officer and detained her for three more days. The arrest was seen as retaliation for Gevorgian's articles alleging that the Armenian police anthem had been lifted from a song used in neighboring Georgia, according to news reports. The charge against her was pending in late year.

Azerbaijan

The authoritarian government of President Ilham Aliyev relied on imprisonments and an atmosphere of impunity to suppress independent journalism. Aliyev, who essentially inherited the presidency of the strategic Caspian Sea nation from his father, used the country's vast oil and gas resources to play off the competing interests of traditional partners Russia and Turkey with those of newer allies such as the European Union and the United States.

Throughout the year, U.S. and European leaders courted Aliyev in hopes of building a pipeline that would take Azerbaijan's Caspian Sea gas reserves through Turkey to the rest of the continent. The move would have broken

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » European Court orders release of Eynulla Fatullayev; government still jails editor.
- » News sites report periodic blocking, typically when sensitive stories are posted.

KEY STATISTIC

4

Journalists interrogated by security agents after running a statement from the jailed Fatullayev.

Russian control of gas exports to Europe. But Russian leaders countered by signing contracts with Aliyev that essentially bought up most of the country's oil and gas surplus. This diplomatic rivalry bolstered Azerbaijan's economy during the global recession and allowed it to ignore Western criticism of its human rights and press freedom abuses.

Confident that it could withstand international pressure, the government continued to imprison Eynulla Fatullayev, a 2009 CPJ International Press Freedom Award recipient. The editor of two now-closed newspapers,

Fatullayev was imprisoned in April 2007 on a series of fabricated charges, including terrorism and defamation, in retaliation for his investigation into the 2005 murder of his boss and mentor, Elmar Huseynov. He was sentenced to more than eight years in prison.

Fatullayev had alleged that Huseynov's murder was ordered by high-ranking officials in Baku and that authorities had engaged in a cover-up in the aftermath. A 2008 CPJ investigation found that while authorities were publicly identifying Georgian citizens as suspects in the slaying, they were taking no evident steps to apprehend or extradite them. As in past years, authorities reported no progress in the Huseynov investigation.

By March 2010, the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights had ordered Fatullayev's immediate release because the government had violated his rights to freedom of expression, a fair trial, and presumption of innocence. As a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights, Azerbaijan is bound to comply with the rulings of the European Court.

Although the European Court turned down an appeal by Azerbaijan in October, authorities continued to hold Fatullayev in late year. By then, Azerbaijani authorities had fabricated additional charges against the editor, CPJ research shows. In July, the Garadagh District Court in Baku sentenced Fatullayev to another two and a half years in prison after claiming to have found heroin in his cell. Fatullayev denied the charge, saying prison guards planted the drugs in his clothes while he was taking a shower. Based on Fatullayev's account and authorities' long-standing persecution of the editor, CPJ concluded that the drug charge was without basis. The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, which oversees implementation of the Strasbourg court's decisions, reprimanded Baku in December for failing to comply with orders to free Fatullayev.

Fatullayev's supporters faced an aggressive campaign of harassment after the imprisoned editor issued a statement from prison in March in which he directly accused officials in the Ministry of National Security (MNB) of plotting the Huseynov murder. On March 17, an anonymous male caller telephoned Emin Fatullayev, the editor's father, at his Baku home and said he and his son must "shut up once and for all" or "the entire family will be destroyed," the elder Fatullayev told CPJ.

MNB officers began summoning journalists to their headquarters in Baku in retaliation for reporting Fatullayev's allegations. News reports identified those summoned as Turan news agency Director Mehman Aliyev, *Yeni Musavat* Editor Rauf Arifoglu, *Nota* weekly reporter Faramaz Novruzoglu, and Khadija Ismayilova, Baku bureau chief of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). Agents with the MNB also summoned Fatullayev's lawyer, Elchin Sadygov, to question him

about the statement. In the interviews, MNB agents made clear that they considered the reports to be harmful to the country's image.

In May, authorities confiscated photographs, video footage, and documents from two Norwegian journalists working on a documentary about freedom of expression in Azerbaijan that focused on the Fatullayev case. Erling Borgen, a reporter and documentary producer, and cameraman Dag Inge Dahl were leaving the country after a week-long reporting trip when they were approached at Baku International Airport by seven men who did not identify themselves, Borgen said. The men seized the journalists' carry-on bags, claiming they were overweight, and checked the luggage. When the journalists arrived in Oslo, Borgen said, the reporting material was gone from the bags. The journalists had backed up the files, however, and completed the documentary in late year.

CPJ research shows that Azerbaijani authorities have a record of using ruses to obstruct and jail journalists. Two independent video bloggers—Emin Milli and Adnan Hajizade—were jailed throughout much of 2010 on fabricated charges brought in reprisal for satirical pieces that mocked government policies. The two were victims of a staged barroom brawl in July 2009, and were arrested themselves for “hooliganism.” The two were freed in November pending appeal. Milli faced a prison sentence of two and a half years, and Hajizade a term of two years.

The circumstances of their arrest were strikingly similar to those involving Genimet Zakhidov, editor of the Baku-based, pro-opposition daily *Azadlyg*. Zakhidov, released from prison in March after serving more than two years, was also jailed on “hooliganism” charges. Here, too, the journalist was ensnared in a staged assault and then charged in the aftermath, CPJ research showed.

With broadcast media the most popular source of news, the government retained tight control over the country's eight national and 14 regional television stations. The president nominates all nine members of the National Television and Radio Council (NSTR), which has succeeded in keeping broadcast media largely in the hands of Aliyev's allies. The NSTR continued to bar the BBC, and the U.S. government-funded Voice of America and RFE/RL, from broadcasting on FM frequencies in Azerbaijan. In 2010, news reports said, the NSTR was developing new regulations requiring online radio and television outlets to obtain licenses.

The government continued using state-run AzTV and private pro-government radio and television stations to broadcast propaganda glorifying Aliyev and ensuring that his ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party would dominate parliamentary elections in November. In September, for instance, broadcast media enthusiastically reported a government “celebration” of Aliyev's

leadership that included raising what officials called the world's largest flag.

Few journalists dared to criticize the president or his family, and self-censorship remained widespread due to the country's restrictive laws, politicized courts, and biased regulatory agencies. Libel remained a criminal offense, with journalists facing up to three years' imprisonment upon conviction. Self-censorship was also spawned by 2009 media restrictions that banned photographers from shooting individuals without explicit consent, and that required news outlets to print rebuttals from individuals aggrieved by news coverage.

Widespread restrictions on traditional media drove increasing numbers of people—particularly the young, urban, and educated—to Internet news sources. Internet penetration rose significantly, to 44 percent, according to data from the International Telecommunication Union. In the absence of specific government restrictions on Internet news, websites such as *Lenta* were able to provide more aggressive coverage than traditional media. Young people increasingly uploaded photos and videos from their mobile phones to sharing sites such as YouTube, according to local and international press reports.

The government, growing anxious about independent news and commentary online, was suspected of periodically blocking domestic access to critical websites. Access to the Azeri-language website of RFE/RL was blocked for two days in March after it posted a translation of a *Washington Post* story about nine luxurious homes in Dubai, worth around US\$75 million, that had been purchased in the names of the president's three young children, according to RFE/RL and local press reports. RFE/RL said its technicians had determined the problem was occurring within Azerbaijan; the government and Internet service providers did not comment.

Journalists worked in an atmosphere of impunity as authorities consistently failed to investigate anti-press attacks. On July 28, a group of unidentified men assaulted *Yeni Musavat* reporter Elmin Badalov and *Milli Yol* Deputy Editor Anar Geraily as they were trying to photograph a luxurious villa in suburban Mardakan reportedly owned by Transportation Minister Ziya Mamedov, the Turan news agency reported. The men, who turned out to be Mamedov's bodyguards, broke Badalov's nose and destroyed his camera, but authorities did not prosecute them, news reports said. No explanation was given.

Reporting in the southwestern exclave of Nakhchivan—surrounded by Armenia, Iran, and Turkey—was particularly dangerous; a small group of independent journalists tried to report on government corruption and suppression of public dissent in the impoverished region. In January, police barred journalists from entering the village of Bananyar for a week

following a massive crackdown on villagers protesting the closure of kiosks where local citizens bought and sold food, RFE/RL reported. Hundreds of police officers were dispatched to intimidate and arrest discontented villagers, RFE/RL said.

In September, Nakhchivan officials escalated a campaign of intimidation against Elman Abbasov and Hakimeldostu Mehdiyev, local correspondents for the Baku-based press freedom group Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS). They pressured the journalists' relatives to stop communicating with them, questioned people who visited their homes after they left, and yelled at them on the street, IRFS reported. Authorities were apparently seeking to obstruct their reporting ahead of the November parliamentary elections. The two continued working nonetheless.

Facing international criticism for its press freedom abuses, the government often responded by increasing pressure on those who documented the problems. On July 21, police summoned Khalid Agaliyev of the Baku-based Media Rights Institute, questioning him about a recent press freedom report and warning him to be careful about harming Azerbaijan's image, according to local press reports.

Belarus

In a massive post-election crackdown, authorities raided news outlets and detained at least 20 journalists covering protests over a flawed December 19 presidential vote that delivered a new term to incumbent Aleksandr Lukashenko. Leading journalists such as Natalya Radina, editor of the pro-opposition news website *Charter 97*, and Irina Khalip, correspondent for the Moscow newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, were among those being held in late year. Security agents stormed newsrooms of major outlets, including Radio for Belarus and the satellite television channel Belsat. Observers with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe criticized the government for secretive vote-counting practices and suppression of news media.

Throughout the year, Lukashenko's government moved aggressively to control the Internet, enacting an expansive new law and giving regulators broad new powers over online content and individual users. In January, Lukashenko signed legislation requiring that all Belarusian-domain websites register with the Information Ministry, that users present identification papers to access the Web at Internet cafés, and that Internet service providers collect client IP addresses and maintain lists of websites visited

by customers. Internationally hosted websites that provide services to Belarusians were also required to register with the government under the law, which took effect on July 1.

By September, all domestic Internet service providers and the technology departments of all state educational, cultural, and government institutions were required to install filtering technology enabling them to block sites deemed objectionable by the government. In October, the government announced that it was compiling blacklists of both local and international sites deemed offensive. As part of the initiative, Lukashenko granted the state Operational Analytical Center the power to issue binding directives to state agencies and Internet providers concerning Web and broadcast content. Lukashenko's son, Viktor, already a national security aide, was appointed head of the agency, reporting directly to his father.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN BELARUS

KEY STATISTIC

- » Authorities wage post-election crackdown, raiding newsrooms and jailing reporters.
- » New Internet law requires registration of sites, tracking of user activity.

20

Journalists detained as government silences coverage of election protests.

Domestic Internet penetration reached 45 percent in 2010, a relatively high figure for the region, according to data from the International Telecommunication Union. Authorities had billed the Internet law as a way to combat pornography, extremism, and human trafficking, but analysts said its reach was much greater. Andrei Bastunets, a lawyer with the Minsk-based Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), said “registration and control” were the government’s top priorities. He told CPJ that the vague language of the law, its filtering and monitoring requirements, and the creation of blacklists did not reflect the officially declared intentions. “All this leads one to suspect that all the provisions of the law will be used against independent news websites that are hosted on foreign servers,” Bastunets said.

Internet cafés strictly enforced ID collection in the initial months of the law’s enactment, while wireless providers demanded passport information from users who sought Wi-Fi connections, BAJ reported. The ID collection appeared to have cut business at Internet cafés significantly, Bastunets said.

BAJ itself was in the regime's crosshairs. In January, the Ministry of Justice ordered the group to stop its legal assistance work on behalf of local journalists, revoke its membership cards, and halt the issuance of future cards. The order carried further legal consequences; two such directives could lead to the closure of the organization under Belarusian law. Authorities also ordered the opposition daily *Narodnaya Volya* and the independent regional newspaper *Brestskaya Gazeta* to print retractions of content deemed false by state officials.

But no news organization came under greater assault than *Charter 97*. In March, police in Minsk raided the outlet and confiscated all of its computers and electronic files, *Charter 97* Editor Radina told CPJ. Authorities said the raids were part of an ongoing probe into alleged defamation of the regional security service head. (In 2009, several news outlets published a public letter in which relatives of jailed police agents accused regional KGB head Ivan Korzh of fabricating a corruption case against the officers. Korzh later won damages from the letter's authors in a civil lawsuit, news reports said.) Prosecutors interrogated Radina extensively, examined the website's computers, and tried to inspect individual e-mail accounts, journalists told CPJ. The offices of *Narodnaya Volya* and the apartment of reporter Khalip were also raided as part of the probe; Khalip and *Narodnaya Volya* editor Svetlana Kalinkina, a former CPJ International Press Freedom Awardee, were similarly interrogated.

Charter 97 cobbled together replacement equipment only to suffer at least a dozen distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) attacks during the year, Radina told CPJ. Coordinated communication requests sent from thousands of IP addresses overloaded *Charter 97* servers, forcing it offline for days at a time. The timing of the cyber-attacks suggested government involvement: The heaviest attacks came after *Charter 97* criticized the Internet law, covered a natural gas pricing dispute between Russia and Belarus, and streamed an anti-Lukashenko documentary produced by the Russian state-controlled broadcaster NTV. The three-part documentary—tacitly approved by the Kremlin amid ongoing political conflict with Lukashenko—accused the Belarusian leader of corruption, authoritarianism, and suppression of dissent, local press reported.

The greatest blow for *Charter 97* came in September, when founder and director Aleh Byabenin, 36, was found hanged at his summer house outside Minsk. Authorities immediately declared the journalist's death a suicide, a finding greeted with deep skepticism among colleagues. Dmitry Bandarenko, a friend who saw the body, told CPJ that Byabenin left no suicide note and had a number of unexplained injuries, including a badly twisted ankle and bruises on his left hand, chest, and back. He and Radina told CPJ that police conducted only a cursory investigation at the scene.

Facing local and international pressure to investigate the death more fully, prosecutors announced later in September that they would consider reclassifying the case as a murder and would allow independent experts to observe their work. Journalists were skeptical any active investigation would be done. As if to confirm their doubts, Lukashenko told Russian journalists in early October that Byabenin had committed suicide. With both independent and government media quoting the president's words, his message to investigators was clear. And in December, prosecutors confirmed their initial finding of suicide.

Charter 97, which denounced the findings in the Byabenin case, also faced a series of threats against its staffers, Radina told CPJ. Anonymous users left comments on its website such as: "We killed one journalist, and your turn will come soon," "Death to the opposition," and "Maybe all Charterers should hang themselves? Radina—to the noose!" Other journalists, including Kalinkina of *Narodnaya Volya*, received similar threats after they publicly questioned the suicide finding in the Byabenin case. Radina and Kalinkina said such threats are a standard hazard in their professional lives. They said critical journalists in Belarus have their phones tapped, their e-mail accounts monitored, and their activities tracked by security agents. In late 2009, for example, Khalip received threats after she e-mailed an article to the independent Moscow newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*. The content of the threats, Khalip said, showed that her e-mail had been intercepted.

Kazakhstan

President Nursultan Nazarbayev's government failed to deliver the press freedom reforms it had promised in exchange for gaining 2010 chairmanship of the Vienna-based Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, or OSCE. Not only did the government renege on explicit pledges to decriminalize libel and bring press laws in line with international standards, it enacted a restrictive new measure governing Internet content and a sweeping privacy law that shielded government officials from public scrutiny.

A CPJ fact-finding mission to Almaty in June found that attacks on the press continued unabated in 2010, even as Kazakhstan led the OSCE, the 56-member pan-European human rights and security body. At least one Kazakh journalist and one prominent human rights activist were jailed in late year in retaliation for their work, and at least two independent newspapers shut operations under government pressure. The administration

continued to use politicized defamation complaints and bureaucratic pressure to stifle critical news and information, CPJ found.

In interviews with dozens of journalists, press freedom advocates, and human rights defenders, CPJ also found widespread disillusionment with the OSCE and the international community in general. In the years preceding and including Kazakhstan's chairmanship, they said, the government methodically pursued a course of repression that was unchecked by the international community. Based on its mission, CPJ issued a special report in September that found that Kazakhstan's human rights and press freedom failures had "compromised the OSCE's international reputation as a guardian of these rights, undermined the organization's relevance and effectiveness, and thus devalued human rights in all OSCE states."

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » New laws restrict online news media, shield government officials from scrutiny.
- » OSCE chairman Kazakhstan undermines organization with repression at home.

44

Defamation complaints filed in first six months of 2010, many of them by government officials.

Despite concerns raised by CPJ and others, the Nazarbayev administration persuaded OSCE members to stage a December organizational summit in Astana. A CPJ delegation traveled to Vienna to urge OSCE representatives to address Kazakhstan's poor press freedom record at the summit and restore press freedom as a top issue in 2011. CPJ's Nina Ognianova and Jean-Paul Marthoz met in October with Kazakhstan Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, chairman of the OSCE permanent council, and with OSCE representatives from Belgium, which held the European Union presidency, and Lithuania, the 2011 OSCE chairman.

CPJ noted that OSCE nations had agreed in the Moscow Commitment of 1991 that human rights and fundamental freedoms are a collective concern, not simply an individual state's internal affair. When the summit was held, however, press freedom and human rights went unaddressed, and the Nazarbayev administration was able to use the event to polish the rough edges of its international image. Independent journalists and human rights defenders were dismayed that OSCE members appeared to disregard their core principles.

Enacting restrictive Internet legislation just months before becoming OSCE chairman, Nazarbayev's government showed clear disregard for the organization's principles. The 2009 law equated all Internet resources—including personal blogs, chat rooms, and social networking sites—with traditional media, making them subject to the same repressive restrictions that have long applied to the press. Those regulations—among the harshest in the former Soviet states—criminalize defamation and allow for the seizure of editorial material, the blocking of broadcasts, and the suspension or closure of media outlets.

Kazakh authorities created an agency called the Service to React to Computer Incidents to implement the Internet law. Kuanyshbek Yeseyev, a senior government regulator, announced on March 1 that the service had started a review of “destructive” websites. He also noted the creation of “blacklists” of such sites but did not specify what sites were on them or how a site's “destructive” character would be established. Attempts by local media groups and CPJ to receive clarification went unanswered.

In December 2009, on the cusp of Kazakhstan assuming chairmanship of the OSCE, Nazarbayev signed into law a measure expanding privacy rights in a way that benefited government officials. The legislation banned publication of information about an “individual's life,” while imposing penalties that included closing of media outlets and imprisonment of up to five years for journalists. The law prohibited any “unsanctioned interference into an individual's life,” without making clear distinctions between an individual's private and public life, or between the activities of a public official and those of an ordinary citizen. Analysts say the broadly worded measure would enable government officials to pursue privacy complaints in criminal court against journalists who are covering official activities.

Already, politically motivated defamation claims are used as a censorship tactic against pro-opposition and independent outlets. The local press freedom group Adil Soz found that 44 defamation claims seeking a total of 392 million tenge (US\$2.6 million) in damages had been filed in the first six months of 2010. Of those plaintiffs, half were government officials. Tamara Kaleyeva, head of Adil Soz, told CPJ that news managers know they must avoid criticizing top officials or they will face lawsuits, intimidation, closure, or jail. “Any form of critical coverage of the private or public life of the president and his family is out of the question,” Kaleyeva told CPJ.

When independent newspapers pushed the boundaries, they paid a dear price. The Almaty-based weekly *Respublika*, a persistent government critic, has been a target of arson, threats, and defamation complaints over its 10 years in existence. Throughout 2010, the weekly dealt with the fallout from a September 2009 libel judgment that awarded 60 million

tenge (about US\$400,000) in damages to the partly state-owned BTA Bank. The judgment stemmed from an article claiming the bank had been facing financial pressure from foreign investors. The paper stood by its report.

Under government pressure, printing houses refused to publish the paper throughout the year; *Respublika* staff members produced the weekly on office equipment instead, collating and stapling the pages of each copy as if it were a college term paper. Aggravating matters, an Almaty district court ruled in February that state distributors could not deliver the paper until *Respublika* had paid all the damages to BTA Bank. The weekly appealed, saying it could pay damages only if it remained a viable business, but to no avail. Circulation dropped from 22,000 to 19,000, the paper said.

Respublika's main website was inaccessible to most domestic viewers throughout much of 2010. While alternative Web addresses kept the paper online, many readers were lost amid the ever-shuffling platforms. *Respublika* staff and other journalists believe the main website was blocked by Kazakhtelecom, the country's largest Internet service provider. Kazakhtelecom, which is majority-owned by the government, did not publicly address the assertion and did not respond to CPJ's request for comment. But an experiment carried out by *Respublika* readers in the spring lent credence to the claim. Yevgeniya Plakhina, a *Respublika* reporter, told CPJ that readers were asked to open *Respublika's* website on their personal computers. Readers served by Kazakhtelecom uniformly said they could not load the site, while readers served by other providers were able to access it.

In October, a prison board in Taraz rejected an appeal to move Ramazan Yesergepov, editor of the now-defunct independent newspaper *Alma-Ata Info*, to a lower-security prison colony. Yesergepov was jailed in January 2009 on a trumped-up charge of "collecting state secrets" after his paper published two memos from Kazakhstan's National Security Committee (KNB) that suggested the agency had exerted undue influence on a prosecutor and judge in a criminal tax evasion case. The KNB, embarrassed by the disclosure, called the tax memos "state secrets" and targeted Yesergepov for reprisal. He was tried behind closed doors, deprived of a defense lawyer, and sentenced in August 2009 to three years in jail.

CPJ was initially granted permission to visit Yesergepov in June at a prison colony in Taraz, but officials revoked the approval on the day of the visit. CPJ did interview the editor by passing questions through another visitor. "The cynical actions of our authorities in regard to the human rights of Kazakhs can be considered laughing in the face of the OSCE as an institution," Yesergepov told CPJ from behind bars. "I have little hope that I will be released early. But I do hope that with the support of international organizations, the issue of the lack of fair trial for political prisoners in Kazakhstan will be put on the international agenda."

Yevgeny Zhovtis, a human rights defender who had provided commentary on Kazakh human rights and press freedom issues to international institutions, was serving a four-year prison term in 2010. He was convicted of vehicular manslaughter in September 2009 despite extenuating circumstances and public statements by the victim's family that the charge should not be pursued.

Kazakh police said in October that they had arrested two men suspected of involvement in the 2009 killing in Almaty of Kyrgyz journalist Gennady Pavlyuk. The journalist's widow, Olga, told the Kazakh service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that investigators identified one of the suspects as a Kyrgyz security agent. Pavlyuk, 40, his hands and legs bound with tape, plummeted from the upper-story window of an apartment building. Editor of the independent Kyrgyz newspaper *Bely Parokhod*, a publication known for probing high-level corruption, Pavlyuk had traveled to Almaty on business, the purpose of which remained unclear. Some local news reports said the journalist intended to start an online publication and had traveled to Almaty to meet with potential partners.

Kyrgyzstan

In a year of political revolt and deadly ethnic turmoil, successive presidential administrations cracked down on the press, using censorship, intimidation, and imprisonment. The ouster of the authoritarian Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April, followed in June by wrenching conflict between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents in the south, cut a deep divide in the nation and put its democratic future at risk. At least two journalists were confined when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1, illustrating unchanging repression despite changes in leadership.

History certainly seemed to repeat itself in the spring as Bakiyev followed the same repressive course that fomented the 2005 Tulip Revolution and led to the ouster of Askar Akayev. As local media scrutinized the performance of the Bakiyev administration—which included corruption, the politicized arrests of opposition leaders, and rising energy bills—authorities moved to muzzle the press. The state media regulator, state prosecutors, financial police, and the country's largest Internet service provider were mobilized to shut down critical news outlets and broadcasters.

The crackdown intensified in March after several independent news outlets, including the regional news websites *Ferghana* and *Centrasia*,

and the Kyrgyz service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (also known as Radio Azattyk), covered anti-government protests in the provinces and reported at length on money-laundering allegations in Italy against Bakiyev's financial consultant.

The main telecommunications provider, Kyrgyztelecom, blocked access to *Ferghana* and *Centrasia*, along with several other sites critical of Bakiyev. Soon after, authorities forced several private broadcasters to stop carrying Radio Azattyk programming. Financial police in Bishkek conducted a warrantless raid against the independent broadcaster Stan TV on trumped-up allegations that it was using pirated Microsoft software. Stan TV said the raid was in reprisal for its reporting on the political opposition and unrest in the country, Reuters reported. Print outlets also came under attack: A Bishkek court suspended three independent newspapers, *Achyk Sayasat*, *Nazar*, and *Forum*, after prosecutors alleged that the weeklies had called for revolt and insulted Bakiyev's honor.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Bakiyev censors news media in a failed attempt to hold power.
- » Amid ethnic clashes, Uzbek journalists and outlets targeted for reprisals.

KEY STATISTIC

2

Ethnic Uzbek journalists imprisoned as of December 1.

CPJ and others urged Bakiyev to halt the crackdown, which was reminiscent of events that preceded the 2005 overthrow of Akayev's government. The calls went unheeded. Thousands of protesters marched to Bishkek on April 7, encountering deadly force from government troops that simply stoked their fury. As protesters ransacked and torched local businesses and government offices, Bakiyev, like Akayev in 2005, fled the capital. His government and parliament were disbanded, his house was burned, and he and his relatives were on the run.

An interim government headed by opposition leader Roza Otunbayeva was formed soon after, followed by a June plebiscite in which voters endorsed the interim government and approved a new constitution that created a parliamentary republic. Otunbayeva, who will hold the presidency until December 2011, promised democratic rule and respect for human rights and press freedom—much as Bakiyev did when he first took office.

Bakiyev's flight in April—first to his native southern Kyrgyzstan and then Belarus—brought some initial relief to the news media. The new

government restored access to online media and allowed broadcasters back on the air. But a revival of press freedom was short-lived. In June, ethnic conflict engulfed southern Kyrgyzstan, pitting Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents against each other. Journalists came under attack, targeted in part for their ethnic backgrounds.

Economic and political inequities had long caused ethnic tensions in the south, where majority Uzbeks dominate in business while ethnic Kyrgyz hold political power. In the spring, Uzbek-organized rallies against Bakiyev were perceived by Kyrgyz residents as calls for autonomy. When Otunbayeva, an ethnic Kyrgyz, later sought support from southern Uzbeks, it further disrupted the ethnic balance. The government was able to disperse small-scale inter-ethnic riots in May, but the seeds of greater unrest were sown.

On June 10, violent clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks started in the southern city of Osh and quickly engulfed all of southern Kyrgyzstan. An ethnically motivated brawl at a local casino triggered the violence, according to the New York-based Human Rights Watch, whose researchers witnessed and investigated the conflict. Word of atrocities committed by opposing groups in Osh further stirred conflict throughout the south. In less than a week, participants—in some instances, government forces acting on the side of ethnic Kyrgyz—burned to the ground scores of neighborhoods and businesses, killed hundreds, and uprooted up to half a million residents, Human Rights Watch said in its report. Ethnic Uzbeks bore a much heavier toll.

Instead of confronting the political and humanitarian crisis, authorities lashed out at local journalists and accused them of inciting violence. CPJ research shows that Uzbek media, which were targeted in the crackdown, had covered rallies by ethnic Uzbeks but had not orchestrated calls for violence. The morning after clashes erupted in Osh, the regional government ordered Osh TV and Mezon TV, independent stations with Uzbek owners, to cease their broadcasts. Both stations suffered heavy damage from unidentified vandals shortly after the orders, *Ferghana* reported. Mezon did not return to the air.

Osh TV partially resumed broadcasts in July only to have security agents raid the station without a warrant, confiscate its computers, and briefly detain its director, Khalil Khudoyberdyev, *Ferghana* reported. Khudoyberdyev soon sold the company under pressure to an ethnic Kyrgyz and fled the country, according to *Ferghana* and CPJ sources.

At least four reporters—all ethnic Uzbeks—were targeted for reprisal after covering the clashes, CPJ sources said. Two RFE/RL contributors in Osh faced threats that forced them to temporarily leave the region and

stop working. The two had produced detailed eyewitness reports that were in sharp contrast to the government-approved reports carried in most domestic media.

Azimjon Askarov, director of the local rights group *Vozdukh* and contributor to the regional news site *Voice of Freedom*, and Ulugbek Abdusalomov, editor of the independent weekly *Diydor*, were arrested in June on charges of inciting ethnic unrest. Askarov was also charged with complicity in the murder of a police officer.

Askarov's colleagues told CPJ he was prosecuted in retaliation for reporting on police abuse and beatings of detainees. Defense attorney Nurbek Toktakunov told CPJ that the prosecution failed to produce any evidence or independent eyewitness testimony at the trial. Askarov was beaten in custody, while his lawyer and relatives were threatened, but a Jalal-Abad court imposed a life prison term against the journalist in September.

The investigation of Abdusalomov was marred as well, CPJ research showed. The journalist was not present at the protests that authorities said he had allegedly led. Documents show that at the time the editor was in Bishkek, working on the text of the new constitution as a member of a government committee. The article in *Diydor* that officials alleged had incited ethnic hatred had simply quoted local residents who complained about inequities in southern Kyrgyzstan. The case was pending in late year.

Local and international human rights and press freedom groups, including CPJ, urged Otunbayeva to intervene in the politicized prosecutions. Otunbayeva worked for years in Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Service, serving as an ambassador to the United States among other nations, and later headed the Foreign Ministry under both Akayev and Bakiyev.

Russia

The nation's top investigative agency reopened a series of unsolved journalist murders and reported progress on several fronts. But with convictions elusive, impunity in anti-press attacks continued to stain the nation's international image. Russia ranked eighth on CPJ's 2010 Impunity Index, reflecting one of the worst records in the world, as all but one of 19 press murders since 2000 went unsolved. While no journalists were murdered in 2010, at least one reporter was brutally beaten in retaliation for his work. And that assailant, like nearly all attackers in anti-press cases, remained at large.

The federal Investigative Committee, responsible for probing the most serious crimes in Russia, announced it would reopen at least five unsolved cases after meeting with a CPJ delegation in Moscow in September. It was the third consecutive year that CPJ had traveled to Russia to press officials for justice. At the same time, the Kremlin announced that the Investigative Committee would have greater autonomy under a plan that has the agency reporting directly to President Dmitry Medvedev. The Investigative Committee had previously reported to the federal prosecutor general's office.

"It's a matter of honor for us to solve these murders," Investigative Committee Chairman Aleksandr Bastrykin told the CPJ delegation. "It's a matter of proving our professionalism." Bastrykin and a dozen investigators outlined their plans in a meeting with CPJ board member Kati Marton, Chairman Paul Steiger, Executive Director Joel Simon, Europe and Central Asia Program Coordinator Nina Ognianova, and CPJ Senior European Adviser Jean-Paul Marthoz.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA

KEY STATISTIC

- » Some progress in journalist murder probes, but attacks continue with impunity.
- » FSB given broad detention powers in measure that targets critical media.



Unsolved journalist murder cases that Russia's top investigators pledged to reopen.

Investigators took several positive, if incremental, steps during the year. Two suspects were awaiting trial in late year in the 2009 double murder of journalist Anastasiya Baburova and human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov on a Moscow street. In November, the Investigative Committee's Samara regional branch announced that it had identified several suspects in the murders in the early 2000s of Valery Ivanov and Aleksei Sidorov, consecutive editors of the independent newspaper *Tolyattinskoye Obozreniye* in the southern industrial city of Togliatti. One suspect, the agency said, was in custody.

In their meeting with CPJ, investigators reported limited progress in two high-profile cases: the October 2006 slaying of investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya, and the July 2009 kidnapping and murder of the Grozny-based human rights journalist Natalya Estemirova.

Detectives said they were probing a widening circle of suspects in the murder of Politkovskaya, a *Novaya Gazeta* reporter who had exposed

human rights abuses in Chechnya. The journalist's killers, they said, were motivated by a desire to ingratiate themselves with Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, who had often been the target of the reporter's hard-hitting stories. Bastrykin said he would seek the extradition of the suspected gunman, who was believed to be hiding in a European country that investigators would not disclose. Investigators said they found no evidence of Kadyrov's involvement in the murder.

Investigative Committee officials also told CPJ that they were trying to locate a Chechen guerrilla fighter, Alkhazur Bashayev, who they accused of murdering Estemirova. News reports suggested that Bashayev was dead, but investigators insisted to CPJ that he was alive and that he remained in Russia. Investigators said they questioned Kadyrov directly in Estemirova's murder case, but, as in the Politkovskaya case, found no evidence of his involvement. No arrests or further progress had been reported by late year.

While Estemirova's killers walked free, Kadyrov took her boss, Oleg Orlov, the head of the Memorial human rights center, to court on charges of criminal slander. After learning of the journalist's violent death, Orlov had publicly blamed Kadyrov. CPJ attended Orlov's trial at a Moscow district court in September to express solidarity, then raised the issue at a meeting with Supreme Court Chief Justice Vyacheslav Lebedev. The chief justice declined direct comment on the case, but said in general that public officials "simply have to bear" criticism. Orlov faced up to three years in prison in the case, which was pending in late year. While aggressively defending his own name, Kadyrov showed no reluctance in smearing the reputations of Memorial staff and other human rights defenders, calling them "enemies of the people, enemies of the law, enemies of the state" on Chechen television.

The Investigative Committee told CPJ that it had opened a new probe into the 2003 death of *Novaya Gazeta* Deputy Editor Yuri Shchekochikhin, who suffered a sudden, mysterious illness. His colleagues believe he was poisoned, and investigators told CPJ they were examining undisclosed new evidence. In the 2004 murder of *Forbes Russia* Editor Paul Klebnikov, the committee said it had named a new investigator. No progress was reported in the case.

The failures of the nation's politicized justice system seemed to converge in the aftermath of the 2008 killing of website publisher Magomed Yevloyev, who was shot in Ingushetia police custody. The Interior Ministry officer who killed Yevloyev in the back of an agency vehicle was convicted on the relatively minor charge of negligent homicide despite evidence that the killing was premeditated and politically inspired. Officer Ibragim Yevloyev, no relation to the victim, was the nephew of Ingushetia Interior Minister Musa Medov, who had been a target of the editor's critical journalism.

Then, in March 2010, the Ingushetia Supreme Court ordered the officer's immediate release, long before his two-year term in a low-security prison settlement had expired. The court placed only minor restrictions on the agent: observe a curfew, restrict his travel, and stay away from mass gatherings. In August, unknown gunmen shot and killed the officer at a café in Nazran, a killing that sparked suspicions that the publisher's family had engaged in the notorious regional practice of "blood vendetta." Magomed Yevloyev's father, Yakhya, denied any family involvement in the slaying. "I wanted [the officer] to suffer, to live with this pain and with the fear of punishment, since he was not punished by law," the father told *The New York Times*. The officer's killing was unsolved in late year.

A lawyer for the Yevloyev family filed an appeal to have Magomed Yevloyev's case reinvestigated. No action had been taken on the appeal by late year.

A brutal November attack on Oleg Kashin, a reporter for the independent business daily *Kommersant* and a popular blogger, drew immediate condemnation from President Medvedev and an unprecedented show of solidarity from Russian journalists. The assertive response signaled that enemies of a free press may no longer benefit from an apathetic Russian public.

Two unidentified men ambushed Kashin, 30, as he was entering his Moscow home after a late night out, news reports said. The assailants, who had been lying in wait, struck the journalist repeatedly with metal rods. The attackers did not take any of his belongings and fled the scene after a neighbor appeared on the street, *Kommersant* reported. Kashin was hospitalized with a broken skull, jaw, fingers, and leg—injuries so severe that he was in a medically induced coma for two weeks. Among other sensitive subjects, the journalist had covered a contentious highway project that would go through a forest in the Moscow suburb of Khimki. His reporting on the highway plan had drawn threats from the pro-Kremlin youth group Molodaya Gvardiya (Young Guards). In August, after Kashin reported on anti-highway protests, the group published a column on its website headlined "Journalist-Betrayers Should Be Punished" along with an image of Kashin with the caption: "He will be punished." The column was removed by the day of the attack, and Molodaya Gvardiya claimed it had no responsibility for the assault.

Although authorities had not identified a motive, the assault on Kashin recalled the savage beating two years earlier of Mikhail Beketov, the now-disabled editor of the independent newspaper *Khimkinskaya Pravda*, who had campaigned against the same highway project. In early November 2008, unknown assailants crushed Beketov's skull, broke his legs, smashed both his hands, and left him for dead in the freezing cold. Neighbors found

him more than 24 hours later, according to doctors, lying in his front yard in Khimki. He underwent multiple surgeries, had a leg and several fingers amputated, and lost the ability to speak. Authorities failed to find his assailants.

But while Beketov's attackers walked free, a Khimki court convicted the editor of criminally slandering local mayor Vladimir Strelchenko, the sponsor of the contentious highway project, in a 2007 television interview. In the interview, the journalist said his car had been set on fire and that the mayor was responsible. Throughout the monthlong slander trial, Beketov was transported to the proceedings in an ambulance and wheeled into the courtroom. Court-ordered damages were nominal, 5,000 rubles (about US\$160). But as with the Estemirova case, the defamation prosecution symbolized a legal system in which the "honor" of powerful public officials seemed to count far more than the lives and safety of citizens. This time, the verdict caused an uproar at home and abroad. CPJ's Marton sent a public letter to Strelchenko on the day of the ruling, calling on him to withdraw his "cruel" complaint. The mayor did not respond, but an appellate court tossed out the verdict and Investigative Committee Chairman Bastrykin ordered a new probe into the 2008 assault on Beketov.

CPJ hosted an Impunity Summit at Columbia University in New York in April, bringing together journalists and press freedom advocates from around the world, including Russia, for discussions on how to fight impunity. CPJ highlighted Russia's impunity record in a February press briefing in Brussels and testified before U.S. Congressional committees on Russia's failure to bring the killers of journalists to justice.

The press was dealt a legal blow in July, when Medvedev signed into law a bill that expanded the powers of security agents. The law granted the Federal Security Service (FSB) broad authority to detain for up to 15 days anyone suspected of planning a crime against Russian security. The law did not specify how security agents would identify potential suspects, or what would constitute a potential crime against the nation's security. Of particular worry was an explanatory note to the new legislation, directed specifically at the media, which stated in part: "Certain mass media outlets, including print and electronic, openly aid the formation of negative processes in the spiritual sphere, the affirmation of the cult of individualism and violence, and the mistrust in the ability of the state to defend its citizens, thus practically involving the youth in extremist activities." Aleksei Simonov, head of the Moscow-based Glasnost Defense Foundation, told CPJ that the law was bound to intimidate government critics because it "brands as extremists all those who disagree with the government, those who stand up against authorities."

One newspaper, the independent weekly *Chernovik* in the turbulent North Caucasus republic of Dagestan, was targeted with criminal allegations of “extremism.” In July 2008, *Chernovik* ran an article that quoted a late guerrilla leader who had accused regional authorities of corruption and enslaving themselves to the Kremlin. Dagestani prosecutors charged *Chernovik*’s editor-in-chief, Nadira Isayeva, with making public calls to extremism and insulting law enforcement in connection with the article.

In the next 18 months, Dagestani authorities raided the homes of *Chernovik* staffers, looking for “extremist” materials. They tried to close down the paper for allegedly carrying “extremist statements” and indicted four other *Chernovik* journalists in connection with a total of 10 articles published in the weekly. *Chernovik* was one of but a handful of independent outlets covering the North Caucasus region—Russia’s most dangerous assignment. The weekly was often critical of regional police and the FSB, incurring the agencies’ wrath. Isayeva and her colleagues contended that the agencies had used heavy-handed anti-terrorist tactics that fueled the rise of radical groups and militant Islam.

In November, in recognition of the newspaper’s courage, CPJ honored Isayeva with a 2010 International Press Freedom Award.

Serbia

Serbian authorities stepped up law enforcement efforts in attacks against **S**journalists, winning convictions in high-profile cases, even as they pursued some restrictive media policies. These sometimes contradictory media practices reflected the broader political goals of President Boris Tadic, who pursued liberal policies such as seeking European Union membership and reconciling with neighboring Balkan states, while appealing to conservatives by refusing to recognize Kosovo’s independence and failing to arrest indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic.

Interior Minister Ivica Dacic was a somewhat surprising leader of the coalition government’s newly assertive efforts to combat anti-press attacks. Head of the Socialist Party of Serbia, Dacic was a protégé of Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, who ruthlessly suppressed media throughout the 1990s. While the Socialist Party remained suspicious of independent journalists, its leaders appeared to accept reformist media policies as a condition of joining the ruling coalition.

Journalists praised government efforts to improve access to public information, singling out the work of a senior information official, Rodoljub

Sabic, for expediting requests. Some progress was also reported in the privatization of local state-owned media outlets, although the effort stalled in mid-year. “There was strong obstruction from mayors and city councils around the country to this privatization because they wanted to retain control over these media outlets,” said Slobodan Kremenjak, a legal adviser for the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM), a local press freedom group.

Politicians and government officials continued using advertising contracts, financial subsidies, secretive ownership structures, and politicized processes for issuing broadcasting licenses, according to ANEM. The global recession and Greek debt crisis also led to a drop in advertising revenue, exacerbating the media’s dependence on government subsidies and advertising revenue from politicians, businesspeople, and politicized government agencies, according to local journalists and media analysts.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Authorities win convictions in anti-press attacks, improve access to information.
- » Constitutional Court strikes down restrictive media ownership regulations.

KEY STATISTIC

3

Suspects convicted and sentenced to prison for threats against B92 journalist.

Authorities obtained convictions in two high-profile attacks on the press. In July, Teofil Pancic, a reporter for the Belgrade weekly *Vreme*, suffered a concussion and injuries to his arms after being attacked by two masked assailants wielding metal bars, according to news reports. “This was no mistake, no robbery, but a personally targeted attack,” Pancic told the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. The journalist was known for his critical coverage of Serbian nationalists and sports hooligans. The president personally condemned the attack and, in August, police detained two men whose DNA was found on the metal bars, according to news reports. The suspects, described as members of an ultranational group, were convicted on assault charges but received sentences of just three months, half the minimum term under the law, according to news reports.

For the first time, prosecutors made use of a 2009 law that made “endangering the safety of a journalist” a crime, according to local and international press reports. Three defendants were convicted under the statute in 2010 for threatening Brankica Stankovic, an award-winning journalist

for the Belgrade-based television station B92. The threats stemmed from her 2009 documentary revealing that members of a nationalist sports club had escaped prosecution on drug trafficking and murder. The three suspects, identified as members of the club, were sentenced to prison terms of three to 16 months in connection with the threats. Police provided Stankovic with guards throughout the year due to ongoing concerns for her security, according to ANEM and local press reports.

Serbian authorities moved forward in prosecuting suspects in the October 2008 car bombing in neighboring Croatia that killed Ivo Pukanic, owner and editorial director of the Zagreb-based political weekly *Nacional*, and Niko Franjic, the paper's marketing director. Three suspects detained in Serbia in 2009—Sreten Jovic, Zeljko Milovanovic, and Milenko Kuzmanovic—went on trial in April in Belgrade because there is no extradition treaty between the two countries. The trial was ongoing at the end of the year. Authorities said organized crime figures had targeted Pukanic to prevent his paper from publishing a series of articles exposing tobacco smuggling in the Balkans. (Six suspects detained in Croatia were convicted in November.)

Despite responding more aggressively to some recent cases of violence and threats against journalists, Serbian police and prosecutors reported no progress in the most prominent unsolved cases from previous years, such as the April 1999 murder of *Dnevni Telegraph* owner and editor Slavko Curuvija, and the June 2001 murder of *Vecernje Novosti* correspondent Milan Pantic.

In some cases, journalists faced risks from authorities themselves. In May, Belgrade District Court officers repeatedly punched Masanorije Josida, a photojournalist with the daily newspaper *Alo*, after he took photos of a nationalist club leader being brought into the court building, news reports said. At the direction of a judge, court officers then erased the journalist's photos. Josida had accreditation and permission to take photos in the court building, ANEM said.

Journalists expressed concern regarding a new electronic communications law passed by parliament and signed into law in June, according to press reports. The law made it easier for authorities to identify journalists' sources through telephone records, ANEM reported, as it allows civilian and military security services to obtain customer call logs from telecommunications companies with only a letter signed by their directors.

In July, journalists and press freedom advocates hailed a decision by the Constitutional Court to strike down restrictive 2009 amendments to the Law on Public Information. The amendments would have allowed only "domestic legal entities" to establish media outlets, presumably barring

individual citizens and foreign entities. The amendments also raised fines for media violations such as failure to obtain government registration. While pleased by the ruling, journalists were dismayed that the government adopted such amendments in the first place.

Ukraine

The disappearance of a critical editor, a series of violent attacks, and several instances of politicized government regulation fueled deteriorating press freedom conditions. Authorities brought charges against another suspect in the 2000 murder of editor Georgy Gongadze, but they ended their long investigation amid controversy by naming a dead official as the sole mastermind.

Viktor Yanukovich, the pro-Kremlin politician who served as prime minister under former President Leonid Kuchma, won the presidency after two rounds of voting that international observers considered free and democratic. Yanukovich outpaced 17 candidates in January balloting, then held off pro-Western rival Yulia Tymoshenko, the prime minister, in a February run-off. Years of political squabbling between Tymoshenko and her sometime-ally, former president Viktor Yushchenko, influenced voters' choices, as did Ukraine's disputes with Russia over natural gas supplies and the effects of the global economic crisis on national finances, analysts said.

To offset his pro-Russia image, Yanukovich traveled in the spring to Brussels and Strasbourg, where he met with European Union officials and promised to pursue press freedom and economic integration with Europe. "As president, I will guarantee freedom of the media and appropriate investigation of any facts of their oppression," he told members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in April. "Strict observance of fundamental rights and freedoms will remain constantly under my personal supervision in order to ensure equal opportunities for all," the president said, according to his press office. The same month, the Interior Ministry announced it would be more aggressive in probing attacks on the press, and said that any allegations involving the police would be reported directly to the minister.

But the high-level statements did not reflect the situation on the ground, CPJ research showed. More than two dozen journalists were subjected to violent attacks in 2010, most of them in the provinces, according to the Kyiv-based press freedom group Institute of Mass Information (IMI) and local press reports. In at least 10 attacks, local officials or law

enforcement agents were identified as perpetrators, CPJ research showed. “Ukraine took the Russian way of media development, which means state control over television, hardly available public information, and unsolved crimes against journalists,” IMI said in an October assessment of Ukraine’s press freedom record.

The most brutal assault happened in March in the western city of Kolomyya, where Vasyly Demyaniv, chief editor of the independent newspaper *Kolomyisky Vestnik*, was hospitalized with a fractured skull and broken knee after two unknown men attacked him in the street. Demyaniv’s colleagues said the attack was related to his critical reporting on local authorities. A few days before the attack, city officials had asked a court to evict the newspaper from offices it rented in a municipal building, according to news reports and IMI. Although police detained two suspects and brought them to court in September, both men said they were coerced into confessing involvement in the attack, the Kyiv-based news agency UNIAN reported. Demyaniv did not recognize the suspects, and prosecutors did not disclose any motive for the attack, the news agency said. The case was pending in late year.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN UKRAINE

KEY STATISTIC

- » Provincial reporters targeted in a series of attacks; editor reported missing.
- » Television journalists continue to face heavy political influence.

1

Mastermind identified in Gongadze murder.

Prosecutors stir controversy by blaming only a dead official for the plot.

Journalists cited several instances in which political pressure influenced news coverage. In May, journalists from two Kyiv television stations, STB and Channel 1+1, issued public letters accusing management of suppressing material critical of Yanukovych or the government. Both authorities and station managers denied influencing editorial policies.

Two independent television channels accused Valery Khoroshkovsky, head of the National Security Service (known by its Ukrainian acronym SBU), of improperly influencing the award of public broadcast frequencies. In June, a district court in Kyiv revoked frequencies awarded to Channel 5 and TVi in a January tender by the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Council, local press reports said. The court acted at the request of the Inter Media Group, which news accounts said was owned

by Khoroshkovsky and run by his wife. The company, which had competed for the frequencies, claimed the council lacked a quorum when the January awards were made.

In a letter to Yanukovich, Channel 5 and TVi accused the SBU chief of influencing the court and urged the president to intervene. In addition to his business interests and SBU office, Khoroshkovsky was a member of the High Justice Council, the government body responsible for nominating and dismissing judges at all levels. Khoroshkovsky denied involvement in the matter, and Yanukovich refused to intervene.

SBU agents were also accused of intimidating journalists. In June, a man who identified himself as an SBU agent threatened to deport Artyom Skoropadsky, a Russian journalist for the business daily *Kommersant-Ukraina*, if he did not stop reporting on opposition politicians and right-wing activists, the Web-based news agency Ukranews reported. The SBU press office denied that the individual making the threat was an agent. The following month, SBU agents in Kyiv summoned blogger Oleg Shinkarenko and forced him to write a statement pledging he would stop criticizing Yanukovich, the news website *TSN* reported. And in October, Konrad Schuller, a reporter for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, accused the SBU of following him and harassing his sources, local press reports said. The agency initially denied the accusation but later acknowledged following him, the local press reported. The agency said the journalist's press accreditation had expired, an explanation that sparked skepticism.

One editor went missing while preparing a critical story about officials in the eastern Kharkiv region, according to a colleague and news reports. Vasyl Klymentyev, editor of the independent weekly *Novyi Stil*, was last seen leaving his home with an unknown man in a BMW on August 11. His deputy, Petr Matviyenko, told the Ukrainian service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) that he and Klymentyev had photographed what he described as the lavish homes of local officials just two days before the disappearance. Regional authorities reported finding the editor's cell phone near a lake outside Kharkiv, according to local press reports, but no other progress was reported by year's end.

Klymentyev's disappearance resurrected the raw emotions and deep-seated feelings of injustice that had long surrounded the murder of the muckraking editor Georgy Gongadze. Gongadze went missing in Kyiv in September 2000; two months later, his decapitated body was discovered on a farm outside the city. On the 10th anniversary of the journalist's murder, Ukrainian prosecutors announced they had finished the probe and had

indicted Aleksei Pukach, a former Interior Ministry general, on charges of strangling Gongadze and ordering three other officers to behead the journalist. The officers had been sentenced to prison in 2008.

Authorities also named the late Interior Minister Yuri Kravchenko as the sole mastermind in the murder. Kravchenko died of two gunshots to the head on the day in 2005 that he was scheduled to give investigators a statement in the Gongadze case. To great skepticism, authorities ruled at the time that Kravchenko's death was a suicide.

Stirring renewed criticism, authorities declined to bring charges against Kuchma, the former president. Kuchma had been suspected in Gongadze's killing ever since audiotapes made secretly by his former bodyguard surfaced in November 2000; on those recordings, Kuchma is heard instructing Kravchenko to "drive out" Gongadze and "give him to the Chechens," according to transcripts obtained by news agencies.

Gongadze's widow, Myroslava Gongadze, accused authorities in September of trying to close the case by laying sole blame on Kravchenko, local and international press reported. "Kravchenko did not have any personal motives to order Georgy's murder," she told RFE/RL's Russian service.

Uzbekistan

Even as President Islam Karimov was calling for more "active" news reporting, his government was rolling out a new tactic designed to quash critical journalism. Using an obscure state agency to formulate the charges, Uzbek prosecutors arrested at least three journalists on vague allegations of defamation. In one of the cases, a photographer was convicted of insulting the whole of Uzbek citizenry with her images of life in rural Uzbekistan.

The new practice supplemented the government's long-standing tactics of repression. Security services continued to harass independent reporters, state agencies still blocked critical websites and enforced censorship in local media, and the government retained the dishonor of being the region's worst jailer of journalists. At least six reporters, including the president's own nephew, Dzhamshid Karimov, were confined in retaliation for their work when CPJ conducted its worldwide census of imprisoned journalists on December 1.

No wonder then that domestic news media might be "toothless," as President Karimov called them in a February address to parliament. In his

speech, he urged lawmakers to “create new conditions for more active reporting by Uzbek media” on government policies, the Moscow-based news website *Ferghana* reported. The administration could start the reform process by halting its recent use of “experts” in the state Agency for Press and Information to build criminal defamation cases against independent reporters. These agency analysts have formulated defamation cases based on the notion that critical journalists could insult the entire Uzbek population and its traditions. No such broad standard of defamation appears to exist in the Uzbek Criminal Code.

The practice gained international attention in January, when Tashkent police charged the prominent photojournalist and documentary filmmaker Umida Akhmedova with defaming and insulting the Uzbek nation. Analysts with the state Agency for Press and Information contended that the journalist’s portfolio, which depicted life in rural Uzbekistan, along with a documentary on the traditional ban against premarital sex, had insulted the country. “Looking at the pictures, a foreigner who had not seen Uzbekistan comes to the conclusion that this is a country where people live in the Middle Ages. The author intentionally focuses on life’s hardships,” the agency said in an analysis submitted to the court, *Ferghana* reported. No individual complainant was presented by the prosecution.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » State deploys analysts to build sweeping criminal defamation cases.
- » Numerous regional and international news websites are blocked.

KEY STATISTIC

6

Journalists in prison on December 1, the highest figure in the region.

Akhmedova was convicted but amnestied the same day as local and international media advocates, including CPJ, decried the prosecution. Her criminal record, however, remained intact and her appeals were denied. The photojournalist was also barred from traveling outside the country, smeared in state-controlled media, and followed in the streets by security agents. The Akhmedova prosecution had a precedent. In 2009, a Tashkent court sentenced Maksim Popov, an HIV/AIDS activist, to seven years in jail on charges that included corruption of minors through distribution of brochures on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. According to the written verdict, obtained by CPJ, the prosecution was based solely on

government analysts' conclusion that a publication on HIV/AIDS prevention violated Uzbek traditions and values. The court ordered all copies of the publication to be burned.

Two other journalists, Abdumalik Boboyev, Tashkent correspondent for the U.S. government-funded Voice of America (VOA), and Vladimir Berezovsky, editor of the pro-government news website *Vesti*, were similarly prosecuted on defamation charges based on the findings of state publication analysts. Courts in Tashkent convicted both journalists in October, generating renewed outcry from domestic and international organizations, including CPJ. As they did in the Akhmedova case, authorities amnestied Berezovsky immediately after his conviction. Boboyev was ordered to pay a heavy fine of 18 million som (about US\$11,000), *Ferghana* reported.

Boboyev was also among at least six independent journalists summoned by Tashkent prosecutors for interrogations in January, according to *Ferghana* and CPJ interviews. In these sessions, authorities made clear that they had been watching the reporters' movements very closely. One of those interrogated told CPJ that prosecutors wielded a detailed, government-compiled dossier that contained not only articles and biographical information, but copies of personal financial transactions and accounts of the reporters' daily activities. No legal counsel was present for the interrogations, during which the journalists were forced to give written responses to prosecutors' questions. Among other things, prosecutors demanded that journalists name the outlets to which they have contributed, reveal any pennames they have used, and explain financial transactions, *Ferghana* reported.

Government data reflected a sizable number of news media: about 950 publications, 97 broadcasters (62 private), four news agencies, and 124 news websites. But CPJ research showed that authorities heavily influenced overall editorial policies, suppressing critical coverage of government actions and sanitizing coverage of international events.

In a rare development, two news anchors for state-controlled Yoshlar TV publicly described censorship practices at work. At an August press conference held at the Tashkent-based human rights group Ezgulik, anchors Saodat Omonova and Malokhat Eshonkulova said that government officials pre-screened their programs, censored reports they found critical of the state, and instructed the journalists to present information from the government-owned news agency. "State officials of any level—from the presidential administration and security council to bank clerks, tax police agents, and customs officers—can interfere in our work," the anchors said. Approached for comment by the BBC, Yoshlar TV representative Sokhibdjon Alidjonov denied government interference, *Ferghana* reported.

Authorities continued to block domestic access to critical international websites, CPJ research showed. CPJ sources said the list of officially blocked media has changed little since the government's violent suppression of civil protests in Andijan in 2005 sparked widespread censorship. That list continued to include the regional news websites *Ferghana*, *CentrAsia*, *Uznews*, *EurasiaNet*, *Voice of Freedom*, *Lenta*, and those associated with the BBC Uzbek Service, the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/FL), and the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle. Authorities continued to jam broadcasts from VOA, RFE/RL, and the BBC as well, sources told CPJ. When clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents took place in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, Uzbek security agents stepped up their monitoring of Internet cafés, *Voice of Freedom* reported.

Uzbek media were generally passive in covering political turmoil and ethnic unrest in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, according to analyses in *Ferghana* and *Uznews*. No Uzbek broadcasters, and few other outlets, reported on protests in Bishkek that led to the ouster of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April, *Ferghana* reported. And when a bloody ethnic conflict engulfed the predominantly Uzbek southern Kyrgyzstan in early June, Uzbek media were relatively silent until the end of the violence, producing generic and government-sanctioned reports, *Uznews* said.

Attacks and developments throughout the region

Croatia

- » In November, the Municipal Court in Zagreb convicted six men in the 2008 car bombing that killed Ivo Pukanic, owner and editorial director of the Zagreb-based political weekly *Nacional*, and Niko Franjic, the paper's marketing director. Zeljko Milovanovic, suspected of activating the bomb under Pukanic's car, was sentenced in absentia to 40 years in jail. Five accomplices were imprisoned for terms of 15 to 33 years, news reports said. Milovanovic, arrested in Serbia in 2009, was standing trial in Belgrade in late year along with two other accomplices. Serbia was trying the suspects because it has no extradition agreement with Croatia. Authorities said organized crime figures had targeted Pukanic to prevent his paper from publishing a series of articles exposing tobacco smuggling in the Balkans.

France

- » Augustin Scalbert, a journalist for the news website *Rue89*, was indicted in June on charges of stealing a 2008 video from the public television channel France 3. The video, which was posted on *Rue89* along with an article by Scalbert, showed French President Nicolas Sarkozy prior to an on-camera interview with France 3. On the recording, the president was seen rebuking two France 3 staffers and suggesting to the news director a question he wanted asked during the interview. A number of video-sharing sites picked up the video, triggering a sharp reaction from Élysée Palace. Scalbert faced up to five years in prison or a fine of up to 375,000 euros (US\$458,000). The case was pending in late year.
- » In September, *Le Monde* filed a lawsuit accusing the president's office of unlawfully using the intelligence services to identify a confidential source used in the paper's coverage of a political finance scandal. *Le Monde* had been on the forefront of press coverage of allegations that Liliane Bettencourt, heiress to the L'Oréal cosmetics empire, had financed the ruling Union for a Popular Movement in exchange for tax breaks. The espionage allegations followed a sensitive debate on protection of news sources in France. In January, after years of campaigning by media, parliament adopted a measure allowing news media to protect confidential sources.

- » France 3 television journalists Hervé Ghesquière and Stéphane Taponier, their translator, Mohammed Reza, and the group's unidentified driver were being held in late year by kidnappers in Afghanistan. The four were abducted in December 2009. The case was fraught with tension between French journalists and authorities. The Sarkozy administration initially expressed irritation at the abducted reporters' perceived imprudence; a French general raised the issue of how much a rescue operation would cost. The media themselves were slow to publicize the case. France 3 managers did not name the journalists until April, arguing that secrecy would better guarantee the captives' safety. By October, though, journalists had mobilized large-scale public campaigns seeking their colleagues' release, while France 3 and Radio France Internationale hosted a two-and-a-half-hour live program in which celebrities took turns expressing sympathy for the hostages.

Greece

- » On July 19, two men wearing police or security uniforms shot and killed Sokratis Giolias, director of the private Athens-based radio station Thema 98.9 and contributor to the popular news website *Troktiko*. The killers lured Giolias, 37, from his apartment in the Ilioupolis suburb of Athens at around 5 a.m., claiming his car was being stolen, and then shot him more than a dozen times, according to international press reports. Forensic experts collected 16 bullet casings from the murder scene that Athens police said matched handguns used by the radical Sect of Revolutionaries, which formed during widespread rioting in 2008, The Associated Press reported. The BBC, quoting Giolias' colleagues, said the reporter was working on a corruption-related story, the details of which were not clear. No arrests were reported by late year.

Hungary

- » Just days before Hungary assumed the 2011 European Union presidency, parliament passed a measure banning news coverage that is "unbalanced," that is "not of public interest," and that focuses on "immoral" topics such as violence, sex, drugs, and alcohol. The restrictions are to be enforced by the government-controlled Media Council, which could levy fines up to 200 million forints (US\$950,000) against broadcasters, 25 million forints (US\$119,000) against daily newspapers and news websites, and 10 million forints (US\$48,000) against weekly and monthly publications. "From now on the press will be under constant pressure," Zoltan Kovacs, editor of the weekly *ES*, told *The Irish Times*. *ES* was among a number of publications that published blank covers in

December to protest the repressive regulations. The measure was fast-tracked through parliament to avoid standard legislative consultation.

Italy

- » Amid a widespread media outcry, the Italian parliament in July postponed action on a controversial wiretapping bill. Backed by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, the bill would have sharply limited police use of wiretaps and journalists' publication of the contents of wiretaps. Presented by sponsors as a way to protect privacy, the legislation was denounced by critics as an attempt to protect the prime minister and his allies from scrutiny. The bill would have limited police wiretaps to two months for most criminal investigations and would also have forbidden the publication of information from leaked phone-tapping before the start of a criminal trial, a process that could take years.

Kosovo

- » On two occasions, assailants in the city of Zvečan threw explosive devices into a courtyard outside the home of Caslav Milisavljević, an editor for Radio Kosovska Mitrovica, the Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organization reported. The attacks occurred early on the mornings of July 20 and September 27, damaging parked cars but causing no injuries, the Belgrade-based independent news website *B92* reported. No arrests were reported by late year. Speaking to reporters in July, Milisavljević said he did not know what had provoked the attack.

Netherlands

- » In a September ruling, the European Court of Human Rights placed significant restrictions on police searches of media premises, marking a victory for press freedom across the continent. CPJ joined with 18 other media organizations in a supporting brief. In its decision in *Sanoma Uitgevers v. the Netherlands*, the European Court held that police cannot search media premises or seize journalistic materials unless they can show it is necessary in the investigation of a serious crime and have obtained a judicial warrant. The case stemmed from a 2002 episode in which authorities seized photos of an illegal street race from the magazine *AutoWeek*. Police had claimed the photos could potentially identify someone wanted in another crime.

Spain

- » In June, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in favor of Spanish editor José Luis Gutiérrez in a 1995 case involving the now-deceased Moroccan king, Hassan II. The matter stemmed from a report in Gutiérrez's newspaper, *Diario 16*, detailing the confiscation of a truck loaded with hashish. A company belonging to the Moroccan royal family owned the truck. The Moroccan royal family won a defamation verdict against Gutiérrez in a Spanish court in 1997, but the European Court held that "the information in question was a matter of general interest. The Spanish public had the right to be informed about drug trafficking in which the Moroccan royal family appeared to be involved, a matter that had moreover been the subject of an investigation before the Spanish criminal courts." CPJ had filed a brief in support of Gutiérrez.

Tajikistan

- » In January, three Tajik judges filed a defamation complaint against the independent weeklies *Farazh*, *Ozodagon*, and *Asia-Plus*, according to news reports. The complaint sought 5.5 million somoni (about US\$1.2 million) in damages against each. Umed Babakhanov, *Asia-Plus'* chief editor, told CPJ that the newspapers had covered a press conference at which a local lawyer condemned the recent convictions of his clients. The papers reported comments by the lawyer, Solekhdzhon Dzhurayev, who said his defendants' rights were violated and that the verdict was unfair, Babakhanov said. The case was pending in late year.
- » In September, Tajik authorities blocked domestic access to several independent news websites and pressured local printing houses to withhold services to critical newspapers, according to the news website *Ferghana* and the Dushanbe-based National Association of Independent Mass Media in Tajikistan. The wave of repression followed a series of critical reports about the Defense Ministry, which were published by the Dushanbe-based newspapers *Farazh*, *Ozodagon*, *Nigokh*, *Millat*, and *Paykon*, and news websites *Asia-Plus*, *Avesta*, *Tjknews*, *Centrasia*, and *Ferghana*. The outlets accused the ministry of botching a September counterinsurgency operation against a militant group in eastern Tajikistan. At least 28 soldiers were killed during the operation, according to local press reports. Defense Minister Sherali Khairulloyev accused the outlets of assisting terrorists, local and international press reported. Government obstruction continued in late year.

- » Authorities in the northern Sogd region arrested Makhmadyusuf Ismoilov, a reporter for the Dushanbe-based weekly *Nuri Zindag*, in November. Regional news outlets first reported the arrest in December. The Dushanbe-based National Association of Independent Media of Tajikistan said Ismoilov was charged with criminal defamation and insult through the media, charges that could bring up to two and a half years in prison. The journalist had criticized the regional government, law enforcement agencies, and the judiciary for alleged management policy-making failures. Ismoilov was being held in late year at a detention facility in Khujand.



Middle East and North Africa

Middle East and North Africa

ANALYSIS 223

Throughout the region, authorities are conflating probing coverage of counterterrorism with terrorism itself. National security has become a convenient way to silence critical voices. By Mohamed Abdel Dayem

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Section break: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a National Journalists Day ceremony. Dozens of Iranian journalists were jailed when he spoke. (Reuters) Analysis: The security court in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, has become a central force in suppressing journalists. (Reuters/Khaled Abdullah)

Suppression Under The Cover of National Security

by Mohamed Abdel Dayem

Relying on an extensive network of sources in the military, government, and Islamist groups, Yemeni freelance journalist Abdulelah Shaea had become a frequent and pointed critic of the administration's counterterrorism efforts. By July, President Ali Abdullah Saleh's government had enough, dispatching security agents to seize and roughly interrogate Shaea for several hours about his reporting.

"The interrogators told me to stop talking to media about the government's campaign against Al-Qaeda. They told me it was for my own good. When I told them that I wouldn't be dissuaded from doing my job, they reminded me that they could disappear me at any time of their choosing," Shaea told CPJ shortly after his release. As promised, the journalist continued his work, which has included exclusive interviews with leaders of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and numerous appearances on the regional satellite broadcaster Al-Jazeera in which he faulted the government's anti-terror tactics.

"He always made them look bad, so as far as they're concerned, that makes him a terrorist," said one Yemeni journalist, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of being subjected to retaliation himself. Indeed, on August 16, security agents raided Shaea's home, seized his computer and notes, detained him incommunicado for a month, and then charged him in a special security court with "planning to carry out terrorist acts" and "providing media support to Al-Qaeda leadership." The evidence presented by late year included only reporting material, according to Shaea's lawyer, Abdel-Rahman Berman.

Throughout the region, governments are conflating critical and probing coverage of counterterrorism with terrorism itself, claiming national security grounds to suppress news and opinions they perceive to be unfavorable. As the practice has become more common, officials have become

emboldened to apply national security grounds to restrict all forms of critical coverage.

In countries from Egypt to Turkey, governments have enacted sweeping national security legislation that criminalizes the coverage of terrorism and, often, all manner of politically sensitive topics. Through laws and policies, nations such as Israel and Yemen restrict independent access to conflict areas in the name of national security. Nowhere are national security tactics more abused than in Iran, where numerous journalists have been jailed on antistate charges that actually spring from political reporting and commentary. In other places, from Sudan to Bahrain, authorities have used harassment, threats, and restrictions on movements to limit independent coverage on sensitive issues. The effect has been to conceal controversial activities and flawed policies, suppress political opposition, and settle scores with critics.

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Security laws are used to jail dozens of critical journalists.

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All governments have a right and obligation to ensure national security by protecting military tactics, guarding national secrets, and combating actions that threaten their citizens. But CPJ research shows that governments in the region have abused national security laws to retaliate against critical journalists. CPJ's 2010 census of imprisoned journalists shows that 37 reporters and editors in the region—and 72 worldwide—were improperly jailed on antistate charges on December 1. Abusive use of national security charges was the single greatest cause of journalist imprisonments, both regionally and worldwide.

CPJ data over the past decade show a resurgent use of antistate accusations by regional governments. The use of such charges—which can range from espionage to subversion to terrorism—was relatively common after the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States. CPJ's census found 19 journalists jailed on antistate charges in the region in December 2001, and 16 the following year. The number dipped throughout the rest of the decade only to rise again in 2009, when antistate charges were leveled in 16 cases.

“Absent the rule of law and a culture of resistance to abusive policies, governments are encouraged to take liberties. The ‘you are either with us or against us’ approach has been adopted by many governments with regard to journalists,” says Roula Mikhael, executive director of the

Beirut-based Maharat Foundation, a group promoting press freedom and democracy.

Over the past five years, Yemen instituted a near-total blackout on media reporting from the war-afflicted northwestern Saada region. Saada's remoteness and the fact that it is accessible through a limited number of heavily monitored roads have enabled the government to establish a reporting ban that Human Rights Watch described as "the strongest in the world." The government justified its actions as a counterinsurgency measure but has not provided a more detailed explanation.

The few local reporters resourceful enough to find a way into Saada were promptly arrested and accused of antistate activities. Abdel Karim al-Khaiwani, editor of the opposition news website *Al-Shoura*, was detained and accused of "belonging to a terrorist cell," "carrying out terrorist operations," and "manufacturing explosives." Although the evidence against al-Khaiwani consisted solely of journalistic material, he was convicted in 2008 and sentenced to a six-year prison term—only to be released later that year on a presidential pardon. Muhammad al-Maqaleh, editor of the opposition news website *Aleshteraki*, faced a similar situation after reporting on government airstrikes in Saada that killed nearly 100 civilians and injured hundreds more. Although agents seized al-Maqaleh in September 2009, the government denied holding him for five months before finally trying him in a state security court on charges of providing aid to rebels. He was released on "humanitarian grounds" in March 2010 after his health deteriorated sharply.



“Governments above all else want to maintain the political status quo,” al-Khawi said. “And they will go to great lengths to do so, including disingenuously accusing journalists of grave crimes when their work endangers that status quo.”

In late 2008, just weeks before its 22-day military campaign in Gaza, Israel imposed a blanket ban on the entry of journalists into the occupied territory. CPJ and numerous press freedom groups called on Israel to lift the restrictions, noting that the 1995 Johannesburg Principles on National Security, Freedom of Expression, and Access to Information allow such limits only when a government can demonstrate that the mere presence of journalists poses a clear risk to the lives of others. The Israeli Supreme Court also opposed the blanket ban, ordering the military to grant at least some access to journalists.

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Conflict zones are declared off-limits on national security grounds.

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The government rebuffed both international groups and the country’s own high court, in the process equating coverage of Palestinian perspectives with actual aid to terrorists. “Any journalist who enters Gaza becomes a fig leaf and front for the Hamas terror organization, and I see no reason why we should help that,” Daniel Seaman, director of Israel’s government press office, told *The New York Times*. In January 2009, Israeli forces bombed the offices of the Hamas-run Al-Aqsa television and *Al-Risala* weekly. Responding to CPJ inquiries about the attacks, the military stated that it “does not target civilian locations unless they are used for terrorist activity.” It provided no supporting evidence.

Creeping use of national security grounds has become a matter of convenience for authorities, said Muamar Orabi, general director of the Ramallah-based Wattan TV. “The excuse of security is one of the easiest ways to silence” critical journalists, he said. Palestinian journalists are particularly prone to these abuses because they are subjected to security restrictions set by Israeli, West Bank, and Gaza authorities. Take correspondent Tariq Abu Zaid, who was arrested in the West Bank in August 2009 solely because of his employer—Al-Aqsa television, a station banned by the Fatah-led government for perceived partisan coverage. In February, he was tried in a military court for “undermining the status of the authority, and resisting the public policy of the Palestinian Authority,” and sentenced to 18 months in prison. Abu Zaid was freed in November

following an executive order from Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Palestinian journalists told CPJ that they are routinely denied Israeli-issued press permits that would enable them to traverse the hundreds of checkpoints dotting the West Bank. Orabi said he could recall only one press permit granted to Wattan TV's 30 journalists over the 14 years the independent broadcaster has been in existence. The only exception, he said, was a "one-time, three-hour permit" that enabled him to take a flight to the United States. The reason given for the routine rejection of permit applications, he said, "is always security—no further justification is ever given."

Fearing reprisals invoked in the name of national security, Orabi said, some journalists engage in self-censorship or partisan reporting. "Many journalists are forced to follow the government line, be that the [Fatah-led] Palestinian Authority or Hamas, while trying to evade Israel's various restrictions," he said. "In the process, it's the journalists and the quality of the reporting that are the ultimate victims."

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*In suppressing dissent, Iranian authorities
rely on national security laws.*

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Governments also exploit national security grounds to settle scores with critics and political opponents. In Iran since June 2009 and in Bahrain in the closing months of 2010, such grounds were used to eliminate coverage of the political opposition.

Following the social unrest that erupted after the disputed June 2009 presidential elections, Iran mounted a massive crackdown against independent and opposition media. The concerted effort to quell any voices that diverged from the government position resulted in the imprisonment of more than 100 journalists and bloggers in the year and a half after the disputed vote. Although many journalists were released after being charged with relatively minor infractions, others faced more serious antistate charges that carried lengthy prison terms and, in some cases, the death penalty.

Of the 34 journalists in custody when CPJ conducted its annual prison census on December 1, at least 25 were being held on charges of having compromised the national security of the Islamic Republic. "Propagating against the regime" was the most frequently leveled count against

journalists in Iran since June 2009, CPJ research found. Yet a review of the journalists' actions that led to these charges and convictions yields activities such as exposing the rape and torture of prisoners, reporting on street demonstrations, interviewing critical clerics and political analysts, and covering the activities of the political opposition.

Mohammad Davari, a recipient of CPJ's 2010 International Press Freedom Award and editor-in-chief of the reformist news website *Saham News*, was serving a five-year prison sentence for documenting allegations of rape and torture at the Kahrizak Detention Center. He was found guilty of "mutiny with the purpose of disrupting national security." Renowned author, journalist, and human rights defender Emadeddin Baghi was detained on security charges after the BBC rebroadcast a two-year-old interview he had conducted with Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, a once-influential cleric whose death in 2009 had galvanized government critics. Baghi, sentenced to six years imprisonment for that interview, suffered severe health problems in custody.

"Among the most urgent needs in Iranian society is transparency and accountability. And the Iranian judiciary has, unfortunately, become a tool to prevent journalists from providing those things," Hadi Ghaemi, director of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, told CPJ. "Journalists who press for accountability and transparency are routinely accused of 'acting against national security' or 'propaganda against the regime.'"

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In Bahrain, a gag order prevents coverage of a widespread crackdown.

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In Bahrain, authorities said they were dismantling "a terrorist network" when they arrested hundreds of people beginning in August and continuing through parliamentary elections in October. Those detained included political activists, human rights defenders, and at least two journalistic bloggers who had been critical of government policies that marginalize the country's Shiite majority.

Independent scrutiny of the crackdown was made nearly impossible by the government's next action. Public Prosecutor Ali al-Buainain issued a gag order barring news media from reporting on the detentions. A defense lawyer noted one exception: The press could publish government statements on the case. The detainees, including bloggers Ali Abdel Imam and Abduljalil Alsingace, were charged with numerous crimes, including

“inciting terrorist acts” and trying to “overthrow and change the political system of the country.”

“Because of the publishing ban on this case, I can’t even comment publicly,” said a Bahraini journalist, who spoke on condition of anonymity. “Otherwise I’ll be sucked into this vortex as well.”

Sudanese and Turkish officials have also used terror charges to suppress political dissent. After veteran Sudanese journalist Al-Haj Ali Warrag wrote favorably about a boycott of the April presidential election and suggested that vote-rigging could occur, he was swiftly charged with “waging war against the state.” Warrag left the country, in part because of the harassment, but journalists with the opposition daily *Rai al-Shaab* met with an even harsher fate. In May, the paper drew the government’s ire with an article claiming that an Iranian-built weapons factory inside Sudan was supplying insurgents. Convicted of “terrorism and espionage” and “inciting sedition,” three *Rai al-Shaab* journalists were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to five years. During the trial, one journalist claimed that he had been tortured in custody.

In Turkey, four journalists were jailed under the country’s anti-terror law, according to CPJ’s 2010 prison census. All were being held for writing about the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in either favorable or neutral terms, CPJ research showed. Using the law, authorities define such writing as “propaganda” and then describe the writers as either members or facilitators of the banned group. The PKK has been embroiled in a three-decade-long armed confrontation with the Turkish government. Ankara has classified the group as an ethnic secessionist movement, and it is listed as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States, the European Union, and the United Nations.

The practice of detaining journalists on unsubstantiated security allegations extends to the U.S. military, which detained at least 14 journalists in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo for prolonged periods beginning in 2001. No criminal charges were corroborated in any of the cases; all of the journalists were eventually released. Associated Press photographer Bilal Hussein, a 2008 CPJ International Press Freedom Award winner, was held by the U.S. military for two years without charge before being freed in April 2008 following a determination that he “no longer presented an imperative threat to security.” Hussein, part of an AP photography team that won a Pulitzer Prize, had been criticized for taking photos of insurgents in combat.

The U.S. detentions, which attracted much coverage in Arabic-language media, provided at least partial cover for regional governments to follow

suit. “Emergency laws, state security, anti-terrorism—these things have always existed. But governments have sensed a new opportunity to repress under these pretexts, and they’ve taken it,” said Mikhael of the Maharat Foundation. “Cutting corners is tolerated” under the rubric of counterterrorism, she said, and that was exemplified by the U.S.-administered detentions of journalists in Iraq and elsewhere.

The Iraqi government has picked up the practice. Saad al-Aossi, editor-in-chief of the critical weekly *Al-Shahid*, was detained and taken to an undisclosed location after he accused Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of cronyism in appointing senior government officials. Al-Aossi was dragged away from his home in Baghdad in April by what family members described to local journalists as a “mixed force of policemen and soldiers.” Journalists and press freedom advocates told CPJ that al-Aossi was being held at an undisclosed Counter-Terrorism Force facility. He had not been charged with a crime by late year.

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In jailing an editor, Iraq takes a lesson from the U.S. military.

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Authorities in Egypt and Syria have used long-standing emergency laws to hold journalists in open-ended detentions without due process. In Syria, CPJ research shows, at least 11 journalistic bloggers have been found guilty of antistate crimes under the emergency law in recent years. Tal al-Mallohi, whose online writings were critical only in the most oblique way, was detained in December 2009. The emergency law enabled authorities to hold her incommunicado for 10 months before finally accusing her of spying for the United States, according to the private daily *Al-Watan*, citing an unnamed security source. No formal charges or supporting evidence were disclosed by late year.

The cases of two Egyptian bloggers illustrate how Cairo continues to exploit an emergency law that has been in effect since the 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat. Mosad Suleiman, known online as Mosad Abu Fagr, regularly wrote about the disenfranchisement of the Bedouin community in Sinai. Arrested under the emergency law, Abu Fagr was acquitted of all charges in February 2008. But authorities invoked emergency law provisions to continue to hold him until July 2010, defying 16 separate court orders demanding his release. Blogger Hani Nazeer was detained in October 2008 after writing articles about Christian minority rights in Egypt. He, too, was held without charge under the emergency law, despite multiple

judicial orders for his release. He was eventually freed in July 2010.

“Even when cases have nothing to do with terrorism, they are handled as if they did, because that gives the authorities more latitude,” said Mohamed Abdel Qudous, chairman of the freedoms committee at the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate.

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Using anti-terror laws becomes a matter of convenience.
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By extending the definition of national security to narrow political concerns, and by applying terror laws to the coverage of terrorism, Abdel Qudous said, authorities are harming not only their own citizens, but the international community as well. “Internally, it deprives an elementary right, the right to free expression. And once that happens, other rights always follow.” International audiences are deprived as well, denied the contextual reporting crucial to understanding events. “The news,” said Abdel Qudous, “becomes unreliable, incomplete, and suspect.”

Mohamed Abdel Dayem is coordinator of CPJ’s Middle East and North Africa program. He is the author of the 2010 special report, “In Yemen, brutal repression cloaked in law.”

Summaries in this chapter were researched and written by Mohamed Abdel Dayem, CPJ Middle East and North Africa program coordinator; Rima Marrouch, CPJ's Beirut-based research associate; Kamel Eddine Labidi, CPJ Middle East representative; and freelance journalist Mariwan Hama-Saeed.

Egypt

Back in 2005, reporters exposed widespread ballot fraud and voter intimidation during the country's first multi-party presidential election. Determined to avoid a repeat of such coverage during the November parliamentary elections, the government blocked satellite television, clamped down on news dissemination techniques, and orchestrated the silencing of critical voices. The ruling National Democratic Party swept the voting amid widespread reports of fraud.

In October, a month before parliamentary balloting, the government-owned satellite transmission company Nilesat abruptly stopped transmitting the signals of 12 private satellite channels and issued warnings to 20 others, according to news reports. Information Minister Anas el-Fekky

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government blocks satellite TV, news texting ahead of parliamentary vote.
- » Political maneuvering seen as critical editor sacked, another jailed.

KEY STATISTIC

12

Satellite television stations taken off the air one month before the election.

labeled the stations “extremist,” but Nabil Abdel Fattah, assistant director of the Cairo-based Al-Ahram Center for Political & Strategic Studies, told Reuters that the move was designed to silence channels that supported Muslim Brotherhood candidates.

The same month, the National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority imposed new rules that effectively barred private production companies from doing live broadcasts. Under the new rule, imposed just in time to block live election coverage, production companies must obtain special

licenses for live broadcasts, The Associated Press reported. “I’ve had to cancel booking and broadcasting for news stations during elections,” Nader Gohar, owner of Cairo News Company, told AP. Private production companies, which supplement news coverage for both international and domestic broadcasters, were instrumental in documenting instances of police officers beating and obstructing voters during the 2005 election.

At the same time, the authority imposed new regulations that effectively blocked most news media from using mass text messaging. The new regulations required news media to obtain a permit from the Ministry of Information and the Supreme Press Council in order to use text messaging services. Independent and opposition newspapers were widely using text messaging to send news alerts to their readers. Under the new rules, only state-approved news agencies and political parties were eligible for permits, according to news reports.

Authorities also used the courts for political ends. In July, a Cairo appeals court suddenly revived a dormant 14-year-old defamation case to keep a vocal government critic in prison. Activist and former newspaper editor Magdy Hussein was seeking release in June after serving three-quarters of a two-year prison term related to his political activism. Such early releases are customarily granted. In this case, though, the Court of Cassation ordered that Hussein be retried on an unrelated 1996 complaint that he defamed a former interior minister in opinion pieces published by the now-defunct paper *Al-Shaab*. Hussein was fined back in 1996, but the retrial yielded a new prison term of one year. The new verdict “obviously came about to keep an influential writer and opposition figure behind bars and far away from future parliamentary and presidential elections,” said Gamal Eid, executive director of the Cairo-based Arab Network for Human Rights Information.

Journalists reported government harassment on Election Day. Ahmad Shokr, an editor at *Al-Masry al-Youm*, told CPJ that several of the daily’s journalists were briefly detained and interrogated. Other journalists, working for both print and television outlets, reported that security personnel had deleted footage from their cameras. The Muslim Brotherhood, which had been the strongest opposition bloc in parliament, was swept out of office in the voting. Analysts saw government repression during the parliamentary vote as a preview of the restrictions that will be put in place for the November 2011 presidential election.

CPJ and others saw political machinations at work in the October dismissal of Ibrahim Eissa, one of the nation’s most critical journalists, as editor-in-chief of the independent daily *Al-Dustour*. His firing came just 24 hours after *Al-Dustour* had been sold to an ownership group that included Al-Sayyid al-Badawi, a media mogul and leader of the opposition Al-Wafd

party. “They bought the newspaper for \$4 million just to stop me from writing,” Eissa told the U.S.-based magazine *Foreign Policy*. Al-Badawi, who had issued public assurances that the new owners would not change the paper’s editorial stance, said the dismissal was a labor dispute centering on staff salaries. But numerous analysts suggested Al-Wafd had struck a deal with the government to sack Eissa.

Eissa has faced ongoing persecution during his career, with more than 60 court cases filed against him for alleged publication violations, according to CPJ research. Eissa also lost a television show in 2010. The satellite channel ON TV pulled his political talk show in October, just a month before the election, the biggest political story of the year. No explanation was offered.

Another popular political show, hosted by Amr Adeeb on the Saudi-owned satellite network Orbit, was suddenly taken off the air in September. News reports said the move came after Adeeb criticized state media for excessively praising Gamal Mubarak, the president’s son and a potential presidential successor. Adeeb told reporters he expected the program would return, but it remained off the air in late year.

Media owners come under significant government pressure, said Ahmed Bahgat, owner of the satellite channel Dream TV and a principal in the independent daily *Al-Masry al-Youm*. In a July interview with his newspaper, he said, “If I get a phone call telling me to shut down Dream TV, I will do so. What can we do? Are we going to fight the state? We can’t.”

Legal persecution of critical journalists continued in 2010 despite presidential promises made in 2004 to end prison sentences in media and publication cases. In September, prosecutors brought criminal defamation charges against the prominent newspaper columnist Hamdi Qandil in connection with a May opinion piece critical of Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit. Qandil and fellow columnist Alaa al-Aswani stopped writing their columns in the independent daily *Al-Shuruq* in September after newspaper managers warned them about “external” pressure to tone down their content, according to CPJ interviews.

The Finance Ministry pressed criminal charges against Wael al-Abrashy, the editor-in-chief of the weekly *Sawt Al-Umma*, and reporter Samar al-Dawi under Article 177 of the penal code for “inciting the public to disobey the law” in connection with a campaign started by the weekly to oppose a controversial new property tax. Article 177 has been used historically to prosecute armed or militant groups. The case was pending in late year.

Blogger Abdel Karim Suleiman, known online as Karim Amer, was released from prison in November after serving a four-year term on charges

of insulting Islam and the president. Amer, the first blogger in the Middle East to be imprisoned explicitly for views expressed online, was harassed and beaten by authorities throughout his time in prison, CPJ sources said.

Egypt enjoys a diverse and fast-growing blogosphere. Journalistic bloggers have been instrumental in uncovering public corruption and the torture of detainees in police custody. But bloggers who express controversial views or are openly critical of government policies are routinely harassed by security agents. The government has numerous tools at its disposal to silence critical bloggers, including the 1996 Press Law, which criminalizes the vaguely defined offense of “spreading false news,” and the penal code, which bars material deemed insulting.

Security forces continued a long-standing practice of obstructing journalists covering street protests. Officers harassed journalists working for Al-Jazeera, Dream TV, *Al-Masry al-Youm*, *Nahdet Misr*, and *Al-Karama* during protests in Cairo organized by the April 6 Youth Movement, according to news reports. Al-Jazeera correspondent Samir Amr told CPJ that “security officers surrounded us, seized our cameras, and ordered us to leave the scene.” Ibrahim Kamal Eldeen, a photographer for *Al-Masry al-Youm*, told CPJ that two officers grabbed him by the neck and pushed him violently. “I showed them my journalist credentials,” he said, “but they told me they didn’t care.”

Iran

Defying international condemnation, the government sustained its widespread crackdown on the press, prosecuting journalists arrested in the aftermath of the disputed June 2009 presidential election and detaining additional critical reporters and editors throughout 2010. More than 100 journalists in all had been detained at various times since the crackdown began, CPJ research showed, a campaign of intimidation unparalleled worldwide in more than a decade. The repression came at a time of great global significance that included disputes over Iran’s nuclear program and tightening international sanctions.

Journalists were repeatedly sentenced to harsh prison terms—often of five or six years, but many of more than 10 years—on vague antistate charges such as “propagating against the regime.” News of these cases trickled out in brief online reports; authorities often pursued the prosecutions under cover of secrecy in closed courts, sometimes denying detainees access to counsel. Human rights defenders documented numerous credible

reports that detainees were abused and housed in deplorable conditions.

Authorities maintained a revolving prison door throughout the year, freeing some detainees on furloughs even as they made new arrests. Journalists freed on furloughs often posted six-figure bonds and endured enormous political pressure to keep silent or turn on their colleagues. At its highest point, in March 2010, the government crackdown had put 52 journalists behind bars, the highest number of detainees CPJ had recorded in a single country since December 1996, when Turkey imprisoned 78 journalists.

At least 34 Iranian journalists remained behind bars when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census on December 1, tying China as the world's worst jailer of the press. But at least 31 other Iranian journalists were on short-term furloughs as of December 1 and could be returned to prison

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAN

KEY STATISTIC

- » Authorities sustain their crackdown on critical journalists, arresting dozens.
- » Journalists face harsh prison terms and mistreatment in custody.

34

Journalists imprisoned on December 1.

Along with China, Iran is the world's worst jailer of the press.

at the whim of the government. And the government made clear that it considered all critics to be enemies of the state. Speaking to a gathering of film industry professionals in September, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyed Mohammad Hosseini warned attendees that their group could face the same fate as the Association of Iranian Journalists. "You saw what happened to it," *Asr-e-Iran* quoted the minister as saying.

Authorities forcibly shut the journalists association, a government-licensed group, in 2009 and then prosecuted its leader in 2010. Badressadat Mofidi, secretary-general of the journalists association, was convicted in August on charges of "assembly and collusion to commit a crime" and "propagating against the regime." Sentenced to six years in prison, she was free on bail in late year but was banned from working on "press-related activities."

Imprisoned journalists suffered from the crowded and unsanitary conditions endemic to Iranian prisons, but they also faced additional punitive measures such as denial of family visits and placement in solitary

confinement. Some were physically abused. Veteran columnist Issa Saharkhiz, for example, was kept in a prison yard overnight in freezing temperatures without shoes or socks, according to the reformist news website *Rooz Online*.

Deprived of recourse, journalists wrote letters of protest and waged hunger strikes. In April, a group of political detainees at Evin Prison wrote an open letter to senior clerics, citing lack of due process, violations of the law during interrogation, restrictions on choosing lawyers, and coercion to “confess” to crimes they did not commit. After the letter appeared on several reformist news websites, prisoners were deprived of their already-limited visitation privileges, transferred to solitary confinement, and subjected to various other arbitrary measures, reformist news websites reported.

Detainees who protested abuse or were perceived as taking on leadership positions were transferred to remote facilities, according to media and human rights organizations. Journalists Ahmad Zaid-Abadi, Kouhyar Goudarzi, Massoud Bastani, and Saharkhiz were transferred to the Rajaei Shahr Prison, which houses violent criminals, many of whom are drug addicts. The facility is infamous for violence, poor sanitary conditions, and the prevalence of communicable diseases, including AIDS.

Authorities routinely placed journalists in solitary confinement to coerce false confessions. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran reported that blogger Hossein Derakhshan was held in solitary confinement for 10 months, during which he was beaten and pressured to confess to being part of an international conspiracy that included foreign intelligence agencies and other journalists and bloggers. Despite retracting his confession in front of a judge, saying that it was coerced, Derakhshan was sentenced in September to more than 19 years in prison on trumped-up espionage charges.

Hamzeh Karami, jailed editor of the reformist website *Jomhoriyat*, issued an open letter to the prosecutor general’s office in August in which he detailed the torture he said he had endured. “They put my head in a dirty toilet 20 times to make me give a false confession. When I screamed ‘Ya Allah’ they said, ‘We are your God today and will do to you whatever we want,’” the journalist wrote in his letter. Other detainees said they, too, were coerced into making false statements. *Newsweek* correspondent Maziar Bahari, who spent four months in custody in 2009, described to CPJ a televised confession he was forced to make as an orchestrated affair designed to implicate and silence political opponents and neutral observers such as journalists. Interrogators, Bahari told CPJ, “flood you with a barrage of accusations. Then they say, ‘We can make a deal, we just need you to do an interview on Iranian television.’”

For detainees, prison conditions aggravated existing ailments and caused new health problems. Saeed Matin-Pour, a reporter for newspapers in western Azerbaijan province, suffered acute heart and respiratory problems but was denied adequate care, his wife told the Human Rights Activists News Agency. Hengameh Shahidi, who was severely beaten by an Evin Prison inmate, was granted medical furlough but was ordered back to prison after just three weeks, before she could complete all her medical examinations.

CPJ research showed the government cruelly manipulated medical furloughs. Veteran journalist Emadeddin Baghi, who suffered from respiratory and cardiac ailments aggravated by previous stints in prison, was transferred to a hospital in March after losing consciousness but was returned to prison within a few days, the BBC reported. He was released in the fall due to numerous health complications only to be recalled to prison in December.

Mofidi, the journalist association head, was denied a medical furlough after her health deteriorated in solitary confinement at Evin Prison. “She suffers from a heart condition and is being given strong tranquilizers as the interrogations are causing her a great deal of stress and exhaustion,” her daughters wrote in a letter that was published on reformist websites. The letter went on to describe “immense psychological and physical pressure, violent and continuous interrogations, solitary confinement, deprivation of phone calls to family, repeated change of prison cells, and an ambiguous legal case.” Mofidi was eventually released on bail pending an appeal of her six-year prison term.

A CPJ report released in June found that of the 85 journalists who left their home countries and went into exile in the previous 12 months, 29 were from Iran. That represents the highest single-year count from any country in the past decade. “My photos were seen as political criticism of clerics in Iran,” said photographer Mohammad Kheirkhan, who went into exile after being harshly interrogated following the June 2009 elections. CPJ research indicates that many of the exiled Iranian journalists were warned through unofficial channels that their families would face retaliation if they made critical statements about press conditions inside Iran.

In August, the imprisoned journalist Saharkhiz and his son, Mehdi, filed a lawsuit against Nokia Siemens Networks under the Alien Torts Act, which allows U.S. federal courts to hear human rights cases brought by foreign citizens for conduct outside the United States. The lawsuit alleged that by providing electronic surveillance technology to Iran, Nokia Siemens Networks and its parent companies, Siemens AG and Nokia Inc., were responsible for the abuses Saharkhiz suffered. In a statement, Nokia Siemens said its actions had not led to the journalist’s abuse.

Iranian authorities announced in November that two unnamed reporters for *Bild am Sonntag*, a German tabloid, would be charged with espionage. They were arrested in October after interviewing relatives of a woman convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning. Iran continued to hold two of three U.S. hikers it had detained on its border with Iraqi Kurdistan in July 2009. Iranian authorities set a February 2011 trial date for Shane Bauer, a journalist who was not on assignment at the time, and companion Josh Fattal. A third hiker, Sarah Shourd, was released in September.

The government's assault on independent and opposition media silenced many critical voices. In addition to closing outlets outright and imprisoning key journalists, the government withheld state advertising and paper subsidies from critical newspapers. Publications still in print engaged in self-censorship to remain in business. Online media, however, provided robust coverage and analysis of domestic and international issues. They also devoted significant attention to the ongoing repression of journalists, bloggers, and political activists.

Although scores of international journalists were expelled from Iran in the weeks and months following the June 2009 presidential election, some international correspondents remained inside the country. Major wire services maintained presences in Tehran, although they were closely monitored by authorities, frequently denied access to newsworthy events, and restricted to the capital without a government permit. Visas were routinely denied to international reporters who had written critically about the government in the past.

Throughout the year, CPJ mounted vigorous advocacy on behalf of persecuted journalists. In March, a coalition of groups led by CPJ launched a campaign called "Our Society Will Be a Free Society," which was aimed at freeing imprisoned journalists. The campaign, named after a pledge made by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on the eve of the 1979 revolution, collected more than 3,500 signatures on a petition addressed to Supreme Leader Sayed Ali Khamenei. CPJ followed with letters to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad protesting harassment of journalists, and to judiciary chief Sadeq Larijani expressing concerns about prison conditions. CPJ also conducted detailed monthly tracking of journalists in prison.

The hardships endured by journalists in Iran have drawn international recognition. In November, CPJ awarded Mohammad Davari, editor-in-chief of the reformist news website *Saham News*, its 2010 International Press Freedom Award. Davari was serving a five-year prison term for "mutiny against the regime" after exposing widespread prisoner abuse and rape at the Kahrizak Detention Center. *Saham News'* coverage was central in exposing the extent of the abuse, which compelled authorities to shut down the facility in 2009.

Also in November, Kouhyar Goudarzi of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters received the Washington-based National Press Club's 2010 John Aubuchon Freedom of the Press Award. Goudarzi was serving a one-year sentence for "propagating against the regime" and "congregation and mutiny with intent to disrupt national security." Iranian journalist and women's rights activist Jila Bani Yaghoob was awarded Reporters Without Borders' Freedom of Expression Award in recognition of her online writings at the sixth international "Best of the Blogs" event held in Berlin in April.

In October, the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers gave Ahmad Zaid-Abadi its Golden Pen of Freedom Award in recognition of his exemplary work. In his acceptance speech on behalf of the imprisoned Zaid-Abadi, exiled Iranian journalist Akbar Ganji called on those in attendance to shed more light on the injustices done to Zaid-Abadi and the scores of other imprisoned and targeted journalists and their families.

Iraq

Instability festered throughout the year as political parties wrangled to form a new government after March elections and U.S. troops handed over security to Iraqi forces in August. At least five journalists and three media support workers were killed in relation to their work, reflecting a persistent level of insecurity. Government forces were holding a critical newspaper editor without apparent charge or due process.

Eight months of deadlock between the country's three main political blocs appeared to end in November when parliament finally reconvened and chose Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, to serve again as president. Talabani reappointed Nouri al-Maliki, head of the Dawaa Party, as prime minister. Ayad Allawi, leader of the secular Iraqiya bloc that actually won the most seats in parliament, was to serve as head of a new National Council for Strategic Policy, and his coalition was awarded the speakership. But key slots remained open when cabinet appointments were made in December, signaling the tenuous nature of the deal.

Amid the uncertainty, journalists faced new legal threats. The Supreme Judicial Council declared in July that it would create a special press court to address media offenses such as defamation. The Journalistic Freedoms Observatory, a local press freedom group, challenged the constitutionality of the court, citing Article 95 of the Iraqi Constitution, which states that "special or exceptional courts may not be established." CPJ research shows

that special press courts have historically been used to restrict and punish critical journalists. Defying widespread objections, the government quietly pressed ahead with the plan. By late September, the special press court heard its first case, a defamation lawsuit filed by the Ministry of Sports and Youth against *Al-Alam*, a Baghdad newspaper that had published a story about alleged mismanagement in the agency. The court found in favor of *Al-Alam* in October.

CPJ had urged authorities to focus their efforts not on a special court but on solving attacks on the press, hundreds of which have been carried out with impunity. Of the 145 journalists killed in Iraq since 2003, for example, at least 93 were targeted for murder, CPJ research showed. Iraqi authorities have failed to bring a single individual to justice in these cases, making the country the worst worldwide on CPJ's Impunity Index, which calculates the number of unsolved journalist murders as a percentage of a nation's population.

As if illustrating the problem of impunity, authorities conducted an opaque investigation into a high-profile journalist murder, producing a cursory report that raised more questions than it provided answers. CPJ and local press freedom organizations challenged the credibility of the probe by Kurdish authorities into the kidnapping and murder of reporter Sardasht Osman.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » New press court, politically motivated lawsuits raise alarm.
- » As instability festers, five journalists, three support workers are killed.

KEY STATISTIC

\$1 billion

Damages sought by the Kurdistan Democratic Party from a newspaper that detailed alleged political corruption.

Gunmen seized Osman near the University of Salahaddin in Arbil on May 4; his body, shot and heavily bruised, was found in eastern Mosul a day later. Osman, an English student at the university who also worked for independent news outlets, had been sharply critical of the Kurdish leadership. His brother, Bashar, told CPJ in May that he was convinced that Osman was killed in connection with a satirical article he wrote for the Sweden-based *Kurdistan Post* in April about high-ranking Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) officials allegedly involved in corruption. The

journalist received numerous threatening phone calls demanding that he stop writing about the KRG and its officials, according to local news reports. After Osman's death, several demonstrations were organized in Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad denouncing the murder and demanding justice.

On May 17, a group of veteran foreign journalists who cover Iraqi Kurdistan wrote a letter to Massoud Barzani, president of the KRG, and Iraqi President Talabani, urging them to launch an independent investigation into Osman's murder. CPJ followed with a May 24 letter to Barzani that expressed concern about deteriorating conditions for the press in Iraqi Kurdistan. Barzani soon appointed a committee to investigate the case, but the committee's members were never identified. The committee's cursory, 430-word report, issued in September, claimed that Osman had been killed by Ansar Al-Islam, an extremist group. The report alleged that the journalist had links to Ansar Al-Islam and had been killed for not carrying out unspecified work for the group. The report cited no supporting evidence for its claims. In a statement published on several websites, Ansar Al-Islam denied the report's claims.

The overall situation deteriorated in the northern provinces under the administration of the KRG. In addition to the abduction and murder of Osman, independent journalists complained about a rise in harassment and politically motivated lawsuits filed by the ruling parties. "The situation for the press is getting worse in Iraqi Kurdistan," Kemal Rauf, editor-in-chief of the independent twice-weekly *Hawlati* newspaper, told CPJ. "There are attempts to restrict the semi-freedom that we have." On March 4, for example, Kurdish security forces known as *asaish* raided Radio Dang, a newly established station in Kalar district, interrupting its programming and confiscating its equipment. Authorities claimed Radio Dang did not have a license to broadcast, an assertion disputed by the station. After an outcry by press freedom groups, the *asaish* returned the equipment and allowed the station to resume broadcasting. Radio Dang was the first independent radio station to broadcast in the area.

Although a press law passed by the Kurdistan regional parliament in 2008 has been lauded, its implementation has been haphazard and its future was in doubt. The law does not authorize prison penalties or the closing of news outlets, but journalists told CPJ that authorities have abused the legal system to pursue critical journalists. Initially, after the law's passage, authorities repeatedly charged journalists under provisions of the much harsher 1969 Iraqi penal code, which remains on the books and provides for extended prison sentences for numerous violations. After CPJ and other groups decried the move, plaintiffs began to file lawsuits under the 1969 Iraqi civil code, also still on the books. CPJ documented a series of politically motivated lawsuits that sought disproportionate damages

intended to silence critical journalists. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), for example, filed several civil suits in 2010 against publications that scrutinized its activities.

Fazil Mirani, secretary of the KDP's politburo, filed the first of those cases in July: a US\$1 billion defamation lawsuit against *Rozhnama* newspaper, affiliated with the main Iraqi Kurdish opposition group Gorran. The paper had published a report claiming that the two ruling parties, the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, had made millions from illicit oil sales. In the following weeks, Mirani filed lawsuits against other newspapers over stories critical of the KDP, each of which demanded 500 million Iraqi dinars (more than US\$400,000) in damages.

KRG officials made a number of public comments reflecting a desire to change the 2008 press law to make its provisions more restrictive. In a July interview with the KDP-affiliated *Gulan* magazine, Barzani said journalists had "negatively taken advantage of this law and have crossed all limits. Now it is up to the parliament to review it, because all the freedoms should be regulated by law." Mohamed Mala Qadir, a member of KDP's politburo, offered similar comments to the private newspaper *Destur* in September: "Freedoms should not be available for journalists to use them any way they want." No formal legislation had been presented in parliament as of late year.

Iraqi government forces seized at least two journalists, one of whom remained in custody when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census of imprisoned journalists on December 1. Police and military officials took Saad al-Aossi, editor-in-chief of the critical weekly *Al-Shahid*, from his home in central Baghdad on April 14, according to press reports. Subsequent news reports said he was being held at a facility administered by the Counter-Terrorism Force, an elite unit reporting directly to Prime Minister al-Maliki. The editor was detained just six days after publishing an opinion piece criticizing the prime minister for lack of transparency in filling high-level government positions. In a letter to al-Maliki, CPJ said the circumstances strongly suggested that al-Aossi was targeted for his critical reporting. No charges against al-Aossi had been publicly disclosed by late year.

On June 3, counterterrorism forces arrested veteran journalist Riyadh Qassim, a spokesman for the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council told the privately owned AK News. The journalist was held on terrorism-related charges, although authorities didn't disclose any details. He spent 25 days in custody before the Al-Karada Investigative Court in Baghdad ruled that there was insufficient evidence to hold him. Qassim worked for the Baghdad-based *Al-Mada* newspaper at the time, but later launched his own paper, *Al-Youm*.

On February 10, the U.S. military released Iraqi photographer and cameraman Ibrahim Jassam after holding him without charge for 17 months in Iraq. Jassam, a freelancer who contributed to Reuters, was arrested on September 2, 2008, by U.S. and Iraqi forces during a raid on his home in Mahmoodiya, south of Baghdad. Although the Iraqi Central Criminal Court concluded in November 2008 that there was no evidence to charge Jassam with a crime, U.S. military forces continued to hold him for more than a year.

“I was treated badly,” Jassam told CPJ in September. “Initially, I was held in a one-square-meter room painted in black for 21 days.” He said that he was interrogated about his work and whether he was photographing in Sunni or Shiite areas. Jassam’s release appeared to close a regrettable chapter in the U.S. involvement in Iraq—the prolonged detention of Iraqi journalists without charge or due process. During the course of the conflict, at least 13 Iraqi journalists were held by the U.S. military for weeks or months without charge, CPJ research showed. All were eventually released without charges ever being corroborated.

In early April, the website WikiLeaks disclosed a U.S. military video showing a July 2007 attack by U.S. forces in Baghdad that resulted in the deaths of several people, among them Reuters photographer Namir Noor-Eldeen and assistant Saeed Chmagh. In April, CPJ sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, reiterating previous calls for a comprehensive, impartial, and public inquiry into the killings of Noor-Eldeen, Chmagh, 15 other journalists, and two other media support workers by U.S. forces in Iraq since 2003. Gates did not respond.

Although deadly violence remained far below the historic levels of 2003 through 2008, journalists continued to be targeted for attack. Riad al-Saray, a presenter of religious programming for state-run Al-Iraqiya television, was killed when a group of unidentified gunmen opened fire on his car in western Baghdad on September 7, according to news reports. Amar Hassan, an Al-Iraqiya colleague, said that al-Saray was on his way to Karbala in southern Iraq when he was gunned down in the early morning. At least 14 other Iraqi Media Network staffers have been killed since the U.S.-led invasion of 2003, the highest death toll for any media organization in Iraq during that period, CPJ research showed.

A day later, Safa al-Din Abdel Hamid, a presenter for the privately owned Al-Mosuliya television, was shot in front of his Mosul home by unidentified gunmen as he was leaving for work in the morning. Abdel Hamid presented a program called “Our Mosques,” which detailed the history of religious landmarks in Mosul, his producer, Mohamed al-Malaki, told CPJ. And on October 4, freelance cameraman Tahrir Kadhim Jawad was killed in Garma. He was on his way to deliver footage to Baghdad, about 50

miles away, when a bomb attached to his car exploded, according to local press freedom groups and online news reports.

A suicide bomber driving a minibus attacked the offices of Al-Arabiya in Baghdad on July 21, killing three support staffers. *The New York Times* reported that Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia claimed responsibility for the bombing, which took the lives of security guards Aysar Mahmoud Hamid Zankana and Mohamed Abd al-Kareem Hadi al-Bayati, and cleaning person Amira Hatem. According to a statement issued by Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia, the attack was in response to a program called “The Death Industry,” which focused on the human toll of terrorism, *The New York Times* reported.

The Islamic State of Iraq, an Al-Qaeda-affiliated group, claimed responsibility for a December suicide attack in Ramadi that killed Omar Rasim al-Qaysi, an anchor for Al-Anbar TV, news accounts said. At least 13 were killed and 40 others wounded when a car bomb detonated at the gate to a government compound. The bombing, which came amid a series of attacks, occurred as Iraqi leaders were struggling to form a new government.

In November, the Communications and Media Commission closed Al-Baghdadia’s Baghdad and Basra offices after the Cairo-based satellite channel aired the demands of gunmen who attacked a Christian church. An hours-long standoff ended when Iraqi security forces stormed the church; in all, 58 people were killed and 75 were wounded.

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

The press operated in a highly polarized environment as Israeli, Hamas, and Fatah officials, all intent on controlling international news coverage, subjected journalists to harassment, detentions, censorship, and severe restrictions on their movements. Tensions peaked in June, when Israeli troops stormed a convoy of ships carrying aid to the Gaza Strip, which was under an Israeli blockade, killing nine passengers and injuring dozens, detaining numerous accompanying reporters, and seizing journalistic material. Israeli authorities accused the organizers of the convoy of subterfuge, while pro-Palestinian activists attempted to use the episode to highlight what they viewed as repressive Israeli policies toward Gaza residents.

The Israeli military detained hundreds of people during the operation,

including at least 18 journalists from Australia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Jordan, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco, and Italy. Many were held for days before being released or deported. First-hand accounts indicated that Israeli authorities harassed the detained journalists, at least six of whom had their equipment either confiscated or destroyed. Othman Battiri, a senior Al-Jazeera producer who was briefly detained, told CPJ that soldiers confiscated the network's cameras, tapes, satellite phones, and mobile phones. Issam Zaatar, an Al-Jazeera photographer who was taken into custody, reported that Israeli soldiers used force, breaking his arm and his camera. He added that he went through a "long and exhausting interrogation."

Paul McGeough, chief correspondent for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, told his newspaper that the raid was "very ugly." "Our job requires us to get the stories and to reveal things that are not otherwise being revealed," he said in an interview published on the paper's website. "As Israel's appalling handling of the flotilla demonstrates, you need journalists there to bear witness, to reveal what is happening out there."

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » In West Bank, Gaza, journalists face obstruction from all sides.
- » Israeli fire kills Lebanese reporter during border clash.

KEY STATISTIC

18

Journalists detained when Israeli forces raided a Gaza-bound aid convoy.

In the days following the raid, the Israeli military released edited portions of video footage, labeled "captured," that had been confiscated from foreign journalists aboard the Gaza-bound flotilla. CPJ strongly criticized Israel's confiscation and manipulation of journalistic material. The Foreign Press Association in Israel, which represents hundreds of foreign correspondents, called the release unethical and unacceptable, warning news outlets to "treat the material with appropriate caution."

The aid flotilla, consisting of six ships, was organized by a coalition of human rights groups, chief among them the Islamist Istanbul-based IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation. Eight of the nine people killed were Turkish citizens—the other was a U.S. citizen of Turkish descent—and all were affiliated with the IHH. Following the raid, Israeli officials alleged that the group had links to Hamas, a claim the organization disputed. Historically, Turkey has been Israel's only regional ally with significant diplomatic, military, and economic ties, but the military raid on the flotilla, which

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan described as “state terrorism,” significantly harmed bilateral ties.

In August, a Lebanese reporter was killed in crossfire while covering a border clash between Israeli and Lebanese military forces near the southern town of Al-Adaysseh. The journalist, Assaf Abu Rahal, who worked for the Lebanese daily *Al-Akhabar*, was struck by an Israeli shell after the skirmish broke out, according to news reports. The fighting was apparently triggered by an Israeli tree-cutting operation along the border. Lebanese authorities claimed Israeli forces crossed the border during the operation, an assertion Israel disputed. Abu Rahal’s death highlighted the continuing instability along Israel’s border with Lebanon in the wake of the 2006 conflict between Israel and the Islamist movement Hezbollah. The fighting in which Abu Rahal was killed was the deadliest along the border since the 2006 conflict, according to news reports.

In late March, journalists working for the international press revealed that Israeli authorities had issued a gag order barring the domestic media from reporting on the case of an Israeli soldier and former Web journalist, Anat Kam, who had been placed under house arrest and charged with “harming national security.” Kam was accused of leaking documents to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, allegedly showing that the military had violated an Israeli Supreme Court decision to cease a policy of assassinations in the Palestinian territories. The gag order was lifted on April 8, after *Haaretz* and at least one other local media outlet announced they would challenge it in court. Kam stated that she was acting as a concerned citizen and did not intend to harm national security, according to the BBC.

In the Palestinian territories, the rift between Fatah, once the main party of the Palestinian national movement, and the Islamist faction Hamas widened after a short-lived coalition fell apart in June 2007. Hamas consolidated control of the Gaza Strip while the Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas retained Fatah rule in the West Bank. Journalists operating in the Palestinian territories were subjected to harassment and censorship by Hamas officials in Gaza and by Palestinian Authority officials in the West Bank. Each party maintained a ban on the distribution of publications they perceived as partisan, and they each obstructed the work of journalists perceived as favoring the other side.

The multifaceted standoff in Gaza between Israeli authorities, Fatah, and Hamas created surreal restrictions on the press. For example, as part of Israel’s sanctions against Gaza, enacted in 2008, authorities restricted the entry into Gaza of newspapers printed in the West Bank. In July 2010, Israeli authorities announced they would allow three daily papers, *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, *Al-Ayyam*, and *Al-Quds*, to enter Gaza. The following day, Hamas security forces blocked distributors in Gaza from picking up the

papers at the Erez Crossing, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. The newspapers, considered pro-Fatah, were directed to sign an agreement stating that they would not criticize Hamas in order to enter the strip, according to Abdel Nasser al-Najjar, chairman of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate and editorial director of *Al-Ayyam*. A Hamas spokesman contacted by CPJ denied that Hamas had requested such a promise.

In February, a military court in the West Bank city of Nablus sentenced journalist Tariq Abu Zaid, who reported for the Hamas-run television station Al-Aqsa TV, to 18 months in prison. Abu Zaid had been held by the Palestinian Military Intelligence Service since August 2009 based on his work for Al-Aqsa TV, which the Palestinian Authority banned in 2007. In January, the Palestinian High Court of Justice in Ramallah ordered Abu Zaid's immediate release, but the order was not implemented; instead, the journalist was convicted of "undermining the status of the [Palestinian] authority" by reporting for a banned news outlet, his lawyer, Bassam Karajeh, told CPJ. Abu Zaid was finally freed in November following an executive order from Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

A second journalist was arrested in May amid Hamas-Fatah tensions. Amer Abu Arfa, a correspondent for the Shihab news agency, was arrested at his West Bank home by Palestinian Authority intelligence agents, according to his father. Shihab, based in the Gaza Strip, was perceived by the Palestinian Authority as being pro-Hamas. In July, a court in Hebron sentenced Abu Arfa to three months in prison and a fine of 500 Jordanian dinars (US\$700) after finding him guilty of "resisting the policies of the authorities" in connection with his reporting.

In October, the Hamas Internal Security agency shuttered the office of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate in Gaza. The syndicate had been holding workshops aimed at uniting journalists across the West Bank and Gaza. The International Federation of Journalists accused Hamas of "targeting journalists who wish to promote solidarity and unity within the Palestinian community." Hamas offered no explanation for the move.

Journalists attempting to operate in the West Bank also faced restrictions from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). A troubling series of press freedom violations in the West Bank, including detentions, censorship, and physical attacks by Israeli soldiers, prompted CPJ in March to call on Israeli authorities to end the harassment of journalists and bring the IDF's practices in line with international standards of press freedom, which allow journalists to conduct their work without deliberate interference.

Journalists reporting on violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers or IDF forces risked physical injury, and some reporters suggested they had been deliberately targeted. In January, soldiers assaulted a group

of Palestinian journalists in Burin, a village south of Nablus. In the past, Israeli settlers have repeatedly cut down or burned trees owned by Burin farmers. Israeli soldiers told the journalists—Rami Swidan, a photographer for Ma'an News Agency; Ashraf Abu Shawish, a cameraman for the news website *Palmedia*; and Reuters photographers Abdel Rahim al-Qusini and Hassan Titi—that they were not allowed to take pictures because the area was a closed military zone. When the journalists refused to stop, Swidan said, soldiers hit them and attempted to take their cameras, before throwing tear gas containers and stun grenades at them. The IDF did not respond to CPJ queries seeking comment either on this episode or on a string of other cases during the year.

On February 6, Israeli forces fired rubber bullets at Xinhua news agency photographer Nidal Ishtieh in Oraq Burin, also near Nablus. Ishtieh was covering clashes between settlers and villagers. Members of the IDF ordered him to stop, he told CPJ. When he insisted on continuing his work, he said, the soldier shot him in the foot with rubber bullets.

On February 8 and 9, Al-Jazeera reported that several journalists covering an Israeli military operation in the Shu'fat refugee camp, just outside East Jerusalem, were injured when Israeli soldiers fired tear gas grenades, stun grenades, and rubber bullets into a crowd containing journalists. Diala Jweihan, a photographer for *Qudsnet*, a news website, was injured in the stomach as a result of an IDF-fired stun grenade. Jweihan told CPJ that she was covering the clashes from a distance when a soldier fired the grenade in her direction. Four cameramen working for various media were also injured by tear gas grenades and rubber bullets fired by Israeli soldiers, according to Al-Jazeera.

On March 7, Associated Press photographer Mahfouz Abu Turk and *Al-Quds* newspaper photographer Mahmoud Alian were injured by Israeli forces while covering clashes between soldiers and Palestinians in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem, according to news reports. Abu Turk told CPJ that he sustained an injury to his right leg when it was hit with a rubber bullet and that a soldier tried to confiscate his camera. On the same day, European Pressphoto Agency photographer Abdel-Hafiz Hashlamoun, *Palmedia* cameraman Abdul Ghani Natshe, Quds TV correspondent Akram Natshe, and Palestinian TV cameraman Mohamed Hmeidat were injured by Israeli forces while covering clashes near the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. Hashlamoun told CPJ that two Israeli soldiers pushed him into a wall and broke his camera. Hmeidat and Akram Natshe both told CPJ that they were beaten and bruised by Israeli soldiers and were forced to leave the scene.

In May, the Israeli military obstructed an Al-Jazeera crew trying to cover a protest rally in the village of Bil'in, west of Ramallah. IDF soldiers

arrested Al-Jazeera cameraman Majdi Bannoura and assistant Nader Abu Zer when they arrived in Bil'in to cover a protest against the separation barrier being erected there by Israel, according to local news reports. Soldiers informed the crew that Bil'in was a closed military zone and that no one was allowed to videotape in the area, Bannoura told CPJ. When Bannoura noted that other media groups had been allowed to videotape there, soldiers handcuffed and blindfolded him and his assistant and took them to a military checkpoint. (Al-Jazeera crews themselves had been allowed to film there previously.) The two journalists were made to wait at the checkpoint for four hours before being transferred to Ofer military base in Ramallah, Bannoura said. There, they were interrogated for half an hour and released with a warning not to return to Bil'in, he told CPJ.

Lebanon

Political tensions grew sharply in late year as the U.N.-sponsored Special Tribunal for Lebanon drew closer to issuing indictments in the 2005 assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri. In November, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) aired a documentary—based on what it described as tribunal sources and documents—that said investigators had uncovered evidence against members of Hezbollah, the Shiite paramilitary and political group with ties to Iran and Syria. The potential for indictments against Hezbollah members raised fears of sectarian violence and the collapse of a coalition government in which Hezbollah held a strong minority bloc. In November, the tribunal revised its rules on staging trials in absentia, apparently reflecting concerns that it may be unable to secure the arrests of the named suspects.

The CBC report portrayed a faltering tribunal probe that had ignored important investigative leads and seen its security compromised. The network also said investigators had long identified a senior Lebanese intelligence official as being involved in the blast that killed al-Hariri, a Sunni, and more than 20 others. The report drew a rare, public response from tribunal prosecutor Daniel Bellemare, who called it “extremely disappointing” and said he was reviewing its impact on the inquiry.

The al-Hariri assassination had marked a deadly year of politically inspired attacks that included the murders of two leading journalists and a bomb attack against a television anchor. The anti-press attacks have all gone unsolved, although the U.N. special tribunal was charged with

examining all politically motivated attacks in Lebanon that year. Samir Qassir, an *Al-Nahar* columnist critical of Syrian influence in Lebanon, was killed in June 2005 when a bomb placed in his car detonated outside his Beirut home. In December of that year, *Al-Nahar* Managing Director Gebran Tueni was killed by a bomb that targeted his armored car in East Beirut. A 2007 report by the U.N. International Independent Investigation Commission found evidence that the slayings of Qassir and Tueni might be linked to the al-Hariri assassination. May Chidiac, a television anchor for the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation and another outspoken critic of Syrian influence, survived a 2005 assassination attempt in which she lost an arm and leg.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » Tensions rise, media polarized as U.N. special tribunal closes in on indictments.
- » Technology bill includes several provisions that could restrict press freedom.



Arrests made in the murders of two journalists and a bomb attack against a third journalist in 2005.

As frictions rose in late 2010, the coalition cabinet stopped meeting regularly, while Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey all sought to mediate differences between Lebanon's political blocs. The tensions were mirrored in the press as media outlets presented competing narratives of the special tribunal's activities. The pan-Arab newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* called it a "media war," pointing particularly to the opposing accounts aired on the al-Hariri family-owned Al-Mustaqbal TV and the Hezbollah-owned Al-Manar TV. The politically colored coverage reflected long-standing partisanship in the domestic press, said Roula Mikhael, executive director of the Beirut-based Maharat Foundation, a group promoting press freedom and democracy. "We are used to messages being sent from one political group to another through the press," she said, noting that virtually all media outlets are closely aligned with political or sectarian groups.

Ghassan Moukhaiber, a member of parliament, submitted legislation in November to overhaul Lebanese press laws and bring them in line with international standards. The bill, drafted in consultation with the Maharat Foundation and journalists, would end prison penalties for publishing offenses and government licensing of news media. The bill was pending in late year.

In mid-year, parliament began considering a technology bill that included several provisions that could restrict press freedom. The bill, pending in late year, focused largely on electronic transactions, but it also called for the creation of a regulatory body with unfettered power to monitor or block electronic speech.

Under the bill, the new Electronic Signature and Services Authority would be empowered “to carry out financial, administrative, and electronic inspections to access any information or computer systems or tools related to operations, including those used for data processing of private information.” In addition, inspectors would have unhindered access to “any document, irrespective of its nature, and to generate copies of it.” The bill offered no safeguards against misuse of user information and provided no mechanism for challenging the regulatory agency’s decisions. The measure would require anyone providing online services to obtain a license from the regulatory agency, but it offered only vague criteria for how applications would be judged.

Reporting critically on the military remained a bright redline for the press. Hassan Alliq, a reporter for the daily *Al-Akhbar*, was interrogated in August concerning an article describing the flight of a retired army general accused of espionage. The piece suggested Lebanese intelligence officials colluded with Israeli counterparts to delay an investigation and allow the general to flee the country. Lebanese intelligence officers unsuccessfully pressed Alliq to reveal his sources, *Al-Akhbar* said. Defense Minister Elias Murr quickly convened a press conference to deny the allegations in *Al-Akhbar*’s story and warn news media against challenging the military, news accounts said. He said journalists would be arrested and questioned if they reported information seen as defaming the army.

In August, a reporter was killed in crossfire while covering a border clash between Israeli and Lebanese military forces near the southern town of Al-Adaysseh. Assaf Abu Rahal, a reporter for the Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbar*, was struck by an Israeli shell after the skirmish broke out, according to news reports. The fighting was apparently triggered by an Israeli tree-cutting operation along the border. Lebanese authorities claimed Israeli forces crossed the border during the operation, an assertion Israel disputed. Abu Rahal’s death highlighted continuing instability along Israel’s border with Lebanon in the wake of the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. The fighting in which Abu Rahal was killed was the deadliest along the border since the 2006 conflict, according to news reports.

Morocco

The government continued using the judiciary to settle scores with critical journalists and pressuring private advertisers to avoid probing publications, two hallmarks of its antagonistic approach to independent and opposition media. The tactics forced two leading independent weeklies to close and a critical daily newspaper to move online.

The closing of *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* in January ended a long struggle between the government of King Mohammed VI and the provocative newsweekly, one that traces the arc of press freedom and repression in Morocco since the late 1990s. When its first iteration emerged in 1997, in the last years of the autocratic King Hassan II, *Le Journal* was seen as evidence of a new political openness. The demise of the newsweekly, after several years of official harassment and court battles, appeared to signal the government's now-entrenched repression of dissent.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Government pressures advertisers, uses courts to punish critical media.
- » Authorities obstruct Spanish and other foreign reporters in Western Sahara.

KEY STATISTIC

2

Leading independent weeklies that closed under government pressure. A daily facing harassment moved online.

Liquidators took control of *Le Journal's* assets in January after a Casablanca commercial appeals court declared its parent company bankrupt, lawyers told CPJ. *Le Journal* had been dealt a devastating financial blow in 2006 when a court ordered that it pay 3 million dirhams (US\$354,000) damages in a defamation case filed by Claude Moniquet, head of the Brussels-based European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center. Moniquet said *Le Journal* had defamed him in an article questioning his group's independence. The organization had issued a report on the disputed Western Sahara that the newsweekly said closely reflected the official view of the Moroccan government. In September 2009, the Supreme Court upheld the award, considered the highest of its kind in Moroccan history.

But *Le Journal* co-founder Aboubakr Jamaï told CPJ that the magazine could have withstood the judgment and paid the newsmagazine's creditors

“had the authorities refrained from regularly ordering advertisers to boycott” the publication. He said authorities stepped up their interference after he returned from exile in 2009 and resumed his critical journalism. The last issue of *Le Journal* carried an article by Jamaï in which he argued that two of the king’s longtime allies, Mohamed Mounir Majidi and Fouad Ali El Himma, exerted disproportionate influence over political and economic life. Majidi was private secretary to the king, while El Himma headed the Party for Authenticity and Modernity, a party reminiscent of groups once set up to promote allegiance to King Hassan II.

Many journalists began looking back to the transition from Hassan to his son. “The friendly relations between the state and the media during the democratic transition” that followed the 1999 death of Hassan II “gave way 10 years later to a policy of demonization of independent journalism,” Anas Ben Saleh, a reporter for the satellite news channel Al-Jazeera, said during a September conference in Rabat organized by a newly established advocacy group, the Organization for Freedom of the Press and Expression in Morocco.

The TelQuel media group closed its pioneering Arabic-language weekly *Nichane* on October 1 after “a persistent advertising boycott,” the company said in a statement. It pointed particularly to an advertising pullout by the ONA Group, a leading industrial and financial corporation in which the royal family owns shares. Launched in 2006 by Ahmed Reda Benchemsi, *Nichane* faced persistent harassment for tackling issues deemed taboo.

The independent *Al-Jarida al-Oula* said it, too, faced the loss of revenue from advertisers pressured by the government to avoid the publication. On May 7, the Casablanca-based daily ceased print publication and moved online. “Our financial difficulties stem from pressure on advertisers due to our editorial line. I believe that after what happened to *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, there is only room left for privately owned and partisan newspapers tolerated by the authorities. The option for us is to move online,” founder and editor Ali Anouzla told CPJ.

Al-Jarida al-Oula still faced a potentially large judgment in a much-publicized 2009 defamation case. A Casablanca court ordered *Al-Jarida al-Oula* and two other newspapers—*Al-Massae* and *Al-Ahdath al-Maghrebia*—to pay damages of 1 million dirhams (US\$125,200) apiece to Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. The judgment was appealed, and the case was pending in late year. Libya had pressured Moroccan authorities to bring the case after the independent dailies had run opinion pieces critical of Qaddafi’s leadership.

In February, a CPJ delegation met with Communications Minister Khalid Naciri in Rabat to express concerns about politicized prosecutions

and harassment of advertisers. “Press freedom is one of the cornerstones of our policy and we have absolutely no intention of wandering away from it,” Naciri told the delegation, a comment that reflected an ongoing disparity between official statements and actions. The next month, CPJ wrote to Mohammed VI to express concern about the “widening gap” between the “government’s stated commitment to the rule of law and its attacks on critical journalists.”

In the letter, CPJ also urged the king to use his constitutional prerogatives to end the unjust imprisonment of Driss Chahtan, editor of the independent weekly *Al-Michaal*. Chahtan had been jailed in October 2009 on charges of “publishing false information” in articles that raised questions about the king’s health during a period when the monarch had not been seen in public. Mohammed VI pardoned Chahtan in June 2010, about eight months into the editor’s 12-month prison sentence. But Chahtan continued to face a politicized defamation case, filed by the widow of a former military officer who was offended by a 2009 article describing the alleged use of prostitutes to blackmail influential figures. In November, a Casablanca court ordered Chahtan to pay damages of 20,000 dirhams (US\$2,370) to the plaintiff.

Authorities pursued retaliatory charges against another critical journalist. In June, a Rabat court sentenced Taoufik Bouachrine, managing director of *Akhbar al-Youm al-Maghrebia*, to six months in prison on fraud charges and ordered him to pay 10,000 Moroccan dirhams (US\$1,120) in damages to the former owner of a Rabat villa that the journalist had purchased three years earlier, his lawyer told CPJ. Bouachrine and his lawyer said courts had previously dismissed the case; he and other journalists saw its revival as political retaliation. Bouachrine was free in late year pending appeal.

Bouachrine had incurred the government’s wrath in September 2009 when his paper published a cartoon that depicted the wedding of Prince Moulay Ismail, a royal cousin. A Casablanca court sentenced Bouachrine and cartoonist Khalid Gueddareach to four-year suspended sentences on charges of failing to show respect to the royal family. Police shut *Akhbar al-Youm* after the cartoon was published, although the newspaper resurfaced in 2010 under a new name, *Akhbar al-Youm al-Maghrebia*.

“The frantic refusal of dissent, however insignificant it may be, is a sign of autocratic drift once more. It is how things started in Tunisia before giving way to rough dictatorship. Will this be Morocco’s fate?” asked Benchemsi, managing editor of the independent weekly *TelQuel*, in a June editorial. Benchemsi, who was writing about a government campaign against a local human rights group, had been the target of politically

motivated prosecutions in the past.

Although Moroccan authorities typically reserve harassment for local news media, they turned their attention in late year to international journalists. On October 29, the government indefinitely withdrew accreditations enabling Al-Jazeera staff to report in the country. The Ministry of Communications accused the station of having “seriously distorted Morocco’s image and manifestly damaged its interests, most notably its territorial integrity.” The territorial allusion referred to the Western Sahara, a region in dispute between Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario Front. Coverage of the Western Sahara is one of the most sensitive issues for the kingdom.

On November 8, authorities blocked at least 10 Spanish journalists from traveling to the Western Sahara city of Laayoun. The government-owned carrier Royal Air Morocco canceled their flights and informed them that they could not buy other tickets to Laayoune. Moroccan officials, who accused Spanish news media of distorting facts about the regional conflict, also withdrew the accreditation of Luis de Vega, a correspondent for the Spanish newspaper *ABC*, and expelled three other Spanish journalists in November, according to news reports.

Although official restrictions on the Internet are relatively few compared to other countries in the region, Moroccan bloggers faced repression. Blogger Boubaker al-Yadib served a six-month jail term after posting pictures of a police crackdown on student protesters in the southern city of Taghjiyt in December 2009, the French daily *Le Monde* reported. He was freed in mid-year.

Sudan

Sudanese journalists faced a familiar, toxic combination of censorship, legalistic harassment, and intimidation as a potentially historic national election instead left ruling authorities further entrenched. Self-censorship was widespread among Sudan’s beleaguered press, while security agents regularly prevented coverage of topics deemed sensitive, including Darfur, the International Criminal Court (ICC), human rights issues, official corruption, secessionism, and state censorship itself. Repression and political unrest continued after the election as attention turned to a planned 2011 national referendum that could result in full independence for South Sudan. Meanwhile, government restrictions continued to inhibit media coverage of the pressing humanitarian crisis in Darfur.

In mid-April, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir was elected with more than 68 percent of the vote, despite a year-old ICC arrest warrant accusing him of crimes against humanity. The election, envisioned as Sudan's first multi-party presidential poll in more than 20 years, was marred by a boycott by major opposition parties, widespread irregularities, and accusations of fraud. (Some opposition parties did participate in other components of the election, including voting for certain legislative, regional, and local seats.) International observers reported that political rights and freedoms were circumscribed during the pre-electoral period, and that vote-counting was opaque and vulnerable to manipulation.

The election and the scheduled referendum are core components of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which brought an end to more than two decades of conflict between Sudan's northern Muslim elite and the South's impoverished non-Muslim population. As part of the agreement, the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) formed a government of national unity led by al-Bashir. Ten southern states were also accorded substantial regional autonomy under the Government of South Sudan, headed by the SPLM's Salva Kiir, who was also re-elected in the April vote.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » Censorship intensifies before election; beatings, imprisonments reported.
- » Authorities use surveillance, harassment, severe legal restrictions to control news.

3

Rai al-Shaab journalists imprisoned, one of whom reported being tortured in custody.

Both the CPA and the 2005 interim constitution affirm the rights of free expression and press freedom. Despite these guarantees, authorities in Khartoum have constructed an oppressive censorship regime through a variety of mechanisms, including restrictive bureaucratic procedures, state surveillance and harassment, and draconian legal regulations. In July, Amnesty International released a report documenting the widespread use of torture by Sudanese security agencies against human rights defenders and critics of the government, including journalists. In August, the security services announced that journalists who had not completed an extensive government questionnaire would be detained. The questionnaire, which was distributed to journalists in July, consisted of detailed queries on

political viewpoints, friends, addresses, bank accounts, and floor plans of the journalists' residences. Several journalists writing for critical publications told CPJ that they refused to submit the information. Some relented after being summoned to security offices for several hours of interrogation and threats. "It is better to be a thief here in Sudan than to be a journalist," Faiz al-Silaik, acting editor of *Ajras Al-Hurriya*, told Reuters. Authorities in the semi-autonomous South also restricted press freedom, particularly with regard to anti-SPLM criticism and coverage of inter-ethnic violence in the region.

Repression of critical voices intensified ahead of the elections. On several occasions in December 2009, police beat and detained journalists attempting to report on clashes between government forces and protesters demanding changes to Sudan's electoral law. In March, the government's National Press Council—ostensibly a media regulatory agency but effectively an arm of the NCP—questioned two Khartoum-based newspaper editors accused of "insulting" the president. The pro-opposition *Rai Al-Shaab* and *Ajras Al-Hurriya* had both published articles suggesting that al-Bashir surrender to the ICC. In early April, the National Press Council charged a prominent journalist and opposition party member, Al-Haj Ali Warrag, with "waging war against the state," a crime under the Sudanese penal code. The charge stemmed from an opinion piece published in *Ajras Al-Huriya*, in which Warrag expressed support for the SPLM's decision to boycott the presidential election and alleged that the NCP was engaged in vote-rigging.

Sudan's security agencies regularly censored coverage of politically sensitive topics. In June, authorities blocked printing of the opposition weekly *Al-Maidan* after its staff failed to provide security personnel with an advance copy of the paper. One of the newspaper's journalists, Abdelgadir Mohammed Abdelgadir, told CPJ that government censors had expanded the unwritten list of subjects considered off-limits to the press to include stories about an ongoing physicians' strike and diplomatic talks in Kampala, Uganda, concerning the International Criminal Court. "In the past, the redline was Darfur or human rights violations," Abdelgadir said. "Today, we have two additional topics: a doctors' strike and the ICC conference in Kampala." The same week, *Ajras Al-Huriya* did not publish for three days because government censors deleted so much content—from literature to sports—that editors believed the editions had been compromised. Stories about the strike and the ICC conference were among those deleted.

In August, Mohamed Atta, director of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS), announced a decision to lift all censorship in Sudan. Journalists remained highly skeptical, noting that similar commitments in

the past—including a near-identical statement in September 2009—had been quickly broken. Indeed, Atta warned that his agency reserved “its constitutional right” to reinstate “full or partial censorship whenever the necessity arises.”

Worsening regional tensions throughout the second half of 2010, though of critical national importance, were another no-go area for the local press. In July, NISS suspended publication of the daily *Al-Intibaha*, accusing the paper of “strengthening separatist tendencies.” The suspension stemmed from an article by the newspaper’s editor-in-chief, El-Tayeb Mustafa, that criticized Libyan involvement in Darfur and Libya’s hosting of a Sudanese rebel group.

Journalists were often caught in the fray of Sudan’s highly partisan political atmosphere. In May, security forces raided the Khartoum offices of *Rai al-Shaab*, halting all printing and confiscating equipment and copies of the newspaper. They also arrested deputy editor Abu Zar al-Amin, along with the newspaper’s political editor and three reporters. The newspaper was subsequently shuttered. The arrests and closure were in retaliation for a report alleging that Iranian agents were working in Sudan to assist insurgents in Africa and the Middle East. The report was dismissed by the ruling party as a scheme by the Popular Congress Party (PCP), which publishes the newspaper, to sour relations between the United States and Sudan; authorities also arrested the PCP’s chief, Hassan al-Turabi, a former ally of al-Bashir who had turned critical of the regime. Al-Amin stated, through his lawyer, that he was severely beaten and tortured with electric shocks while in custody. In July, he and two *Rai al-Shaab* reporters were convicted of “undermining the constitutional system” and “publishing false information” and sentenced to prison terms of two to five years. A fourth journalist was acquitted. The trial raised questions of fairness and procedure; for example, some defense lawyers withdrew from the case to protest the judges’ refusal to accept some of their witnesses.

In a vast country lacking in infrastructure, broadcast media were the only means for most of the population to receive news. But the Khartoum government owned all local television stations and controlled most local radio, aside from outlets backed by the United Nations and a handful of stations based in South Sudan, which fall under the regulatory authority of the regional government. In August, the government suspended the BBC’s license to broadcast in Arabic on local, state-operated FM frequencies in four northern cities, including Khartoum. Authorities claimed the decision was “not at all connected” to the BBC’s news coverage, instead alleging that the BBC had brought satellite equipment into the country in violation of a prior agreement with the government. BBC officials expressed disappointment over the suspension and said they would attempt to resolve the

standoff through discussions with the government. In October, Sudanese authorities declined to renew the license of Radio France Internationale's Arabic-language service, known as Monte Carlo, to broadcast on local frequencies. According to the U.N.-backed radio station Miraya FM (which is based in the South), a senior NCP official, Rabie Abdulatti, said that the suspension was not politically motivated. Abdulatti added that licensing required various conditions, including "conditions of reciprocity that would permit Sudanese radio to broadcast its material in Britain and France."

Authorities in the South, where the SPLM is politically dominant, also harassed broadcast journalists. In March, security officers in the southern state of Central Equatoria raided two local radio stations, temporarily forced them to stop broadcasting, and detained staff. The raid on Liberty FM was apparently prompted by an interview with an independent state gubernatorial candidate who was challenging the SPLM ticket. Security agents did not explain their decision to raid the Roman Catholic-run Bakhita Radio and arrest its manager, a nun. However, the station was warned to stay away from politics and broadcast only religious programs, according to news reports. Both stations said their staff members were later released and that they resumed broadcasting the same day. In May, a minister in the southern government criticized Miraya FM for airing an interview with George Athor, a dissident SPLM commander who threatened to launch a rebellion after losing in regional elections. Some local journalists expressed disapproval of the minister's statements, saying they pointed to political intolerance.

While the outlook for Sudan's media appeared grim with the approaching referendum—which U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton referred to in August as "a ticking time bomb"—some young Sudanese activists were harnessing the power of the Internet and social networking sites to press for nonviolent change. Members of the nascent pro-democracy movement Girifna (Arabic for "We are fed up") aired information on citizens' rights via Facebook, YouTube, and an online radio station. Volunteers alerted activists to repression via cell-phone videos, text messages, and Skype, according to *The Washington Post*.

Tunisia

Tunisia remained one of the region's most repressive nations even as it sought to project an image of liberalism and modernity. The government of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali jailed at least three

journalists during the year, one of whom remained in custody when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1. Vague new legislation targeted critical journalists and human rights defenders by criminalizing international communications that the government deemed harmful to its interests.

Under the measure, an amendment to the penal code, Tunisians were barred from having “contacts with agents of a foreign power or a foreign organization with a view to inciting them to harm the vital interests” of Tunisia or its “economic security,” the official *Tunis Afrique Presse* reported. Violations were punishable by up to five years in prison. The Chamber of Deputies, largely controlled by Ben Ali’s ruling party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally, passed the measure on June 15 and the president quickly signed it into law. CPJ condemned the legislation, saying its broad language allowed the government to punish anyone who reported critical information of international interest.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

KEY STATISTIC

- » Targeting journalists, government criminalizes contact with foreign organizations.
- » Private broadcast licenses are controlled by Ben Ali’s family and friends.

5

Years of imprisonment for violations of new law barring contact with foreign groups.

Passage of the law, in fact, came just as Tunisian human rights defenders had stepped up their advocacy with the European Union. They had urged the EU not to grant Tunisia advanced status unless the government took concrete steps toward improving its human rights record, particularly in regard to its long-standing efforts to silence dissent. Advanced status would enable Tunisia’s gradual integration into EU markets. The EU did not publicly react to the passage of the restrictive amendment to the penal code, and talks over advanced status continued in late year. Under pressure from France and Italy, which have close ties to Tunisia, the EU was expected to eventually grant Tunisia advanced status.

The government’s hard-line tactics were reflected in the imprisonment of Fahem Boukadous, correspondent for the satellite-television station *Al-Hiwar Al-Tunisi*. Authorities jailed Boukadous in July after an appeals court upheld a conviction stemming from his coverage of violent labor protests in the Gafsa mining region in 2008. Sentenced to a four-year prison term on charges of “belonging to a criminal association” and spreading

materials “likely to harm public order,” he was taken into custody a day after he left a hospital in Sousse, where he was treated for acute asthma. Family and colleagues expressed great concern about the well-being of the journalist, who waged a hunger strike in October to protest his detention.

The U.S. State Department criticized the harsh verdict and the “decline in political freedoms in Tunisia.” The Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the U.S. concerns were based on “false information,” and that “freedoms” have been strengthened “both in theory and practice” under Ben Ali. The Tunisian government has employed an ongoing tactic of flatly denying press freedom abuses, CPJ research shows.

Its repressive practices, though, were evident. In March, police ordered journalists not to attend a scheduled press conference at which Human Rights Watch planned to release a report on Tunisian political prisoners. The press conference had been moved to a law office after several Tunis hotels, at the direction of Tunisian authorities, refused to host the event, local sources told CPJ. At least four journalists told CPJ that police physically prevented them from meeting with the human rights organization.

Two journalists imprisoned for their work, Zouhair Makhoulf and Taoufik Ben Brik, were released during the year. Makhoulf, a contributor to the Tunisian news website *Assabil Online*, served more than three months in prison on charges of “harming and disturbing others through public communications,” which stemmed from his reporting on pollution in the industrial areas of Nabeul. Ben Brik, a harsh critic of the administration, served six months in prison on assault charges that CPJ concluded were fabricated in reprisal for his work.

Critical journalists faced harsh retaliation even after they were released from custody, CPJ research showed. Slim Boukhdhir, a blogger and freelance journalist, was released in 2008 after serving eight months in prison on a fabricated charge of assaulting a government employee and breaching “public morality standards.” But freedom was relative for Boukhdhir, whose movements were severely restricted; police seized his national identification card in 2009, and authorities ignored his repeated applications for a passport. Four Tunisian journalists exiled in France told CPJ in June that Tunis authorities had refused to renew their passports, thus restricting their movements. One of the journalists, Slim Bagga, editor of the now-defunct opposition monthly *LAudace*, said he had also received anonymous death threats by phone and mail.

Authorities continued to block domestic access to the independent news site *Kalima*, and they harassed journalists working for the outlet. Mouldi Zouabi, a correspondent, faced assault charges in October that his lawyer said had been fabricated. *Kalima* co-founder Sihem Bensedrine, in

exile in Spain, remained under official investigation for alleged broadcasting violations concerning the site's online radio component. As in the past, pro-government media outlets targeted Bensedrine with smears, CPJ research found.

Kalima and Radio 6, another Internet radio station, had applied several times for broadcasting licenses, but to no avail. Private broadcasting licenses have been granted solely to Ben Ali's family and friends since the government began considering applications in 2003, CPJ research showed. In September, the president's daughter, Cyrine Ben Ali Mabrouk, launched an FM station called Chems. "I am confident that this radio will contribute to developing the national media landscape, in light of our decision to open up the audio-visual field to the private sector so that it contributes to enriching and diversifying the Tunisian media scene and improving its performance," Ben Ali said in a congratulatory message to Chems.

The greatest beneficiary of the licensing has been the president's son-in-law, Sakhr Materi. Since his marriage to Nesrine Ben Ali in 2004, Materi has been granted licenses to launch Zitouna Radio and Zitouna TV; in 2009, he also took control of the leading private media conglomerate Dar Assabah, which publishes two dailies and two weeklies. In October, the government granted a broadcast license to Mourad Gueddiche, son of Mohamed Gueddiche, Ben Ali's adviser and medical doctor, to establish a private radio station called Express FM.

Opposition journalists faced ongoing harassment. Ahmed Nejib Chebbi, managing editor of the opposition weekly *Al-Mawkif*, waged a hunger strike in September to protest government pressure being exerted on his printing contractor. Such pressure delayed production of a September issue that carried several stories critical of the government. Among them was a front-page piece detailing the theft in Paris of documents and other belongings from Al-Jazeera producer Ahmed Mansour. The journalist had traveled to the French capital to interview Ahmed Bennour, a former Tunisian official who had been Ben Ali's supervisor before the 1987 coup.

Many independent and opposition journalists told CPJ that their e-mails were routinely monitored and their international phone calls impeded. The Tunisia Monitoring Group, a coalition of 20 organizations under the umbrella of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, published a report in June titled, "Behind the Façade: How a Politicized Judiciary and Administrative Sanctions Undermine Tunisian Human Rights," which included a sampling of websites blocked in Tunisia. The monitoring group, which had conducted seven fact-finding missions to Tunisia since 2005, described a "dire" climate for free expression in which critical reporters were regularly harassed, applications for independent newspapers and radio sta-

tions ignored, and online new sites consistently censored. It noted that at least 30 international and local news, human rights, and political websites were blocked domestically.

CPJ website pages concerning Tunisia were disabled within the country, local journalists said, noting that similar, selective blocking was seen on other news and human rights websites. The website of the new Tunisian Observatory for Union Rights and Freedoms was blocked in October immediately after its launch.

Turkey

Authorities paraded journalists into court on anti-terror, criminal defamation, and state security charges as they tried to suppress critical news and commentary on issues involving national identity, the Kurdish minority, and an alleged anti-government conspiracy. The European Court of Human Rights found that Turkish authorities bore culpability in the 2007 slaying of editor Hrant Dink, even as the government struggled to bring anyone to justice in the murder.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS

- » Authorities use anti-terror, defamation, security laws to prosecute journalists.
- » EU criticizes press record, citing prosecutions, insufficient legal guarantees.

KEY STATISTIC



0 Convictions obtained in the 2007 slaying of editor Hrant Dink.

In September, voters approved a package of constitutional changes the government said would strengthen democracy and bring Turkey in line with European norms, but the reforms failed to address severe limits on press freedom. Article 26 of the Turkish Constitution, while addressing the right of free expression, places a litany of restrictions on its use, including national security, public safety, territorial integrity, crime prevention, individual dignity, and professional secrets. The European Union broadly criticized Turkey's press freedom record in its annual assessment of the country's now-lagging accession bid. The report, issued in November, found that Turkish law insufficiently guarantees free expression and

that authorities exert undue political pressure on news media. It faulted authorities for prosecuting journalists for expressing nonviolent opinions and raised particular concerns about the high number of criminal cases brought against journalists reporting on the anti-government plot known as the Ergenekon affair.

Anti-terror legislation, which provides for harsh prison penalties and fines, was used against numerous critical journalists, many of them writing about Kurdish issues and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. The government's treatment of the country's 14 million ethnic Kurds, most living in the east and southeast, has long been a focus of international criticism and domestic sensitivity. Forcibly assimilated into Turkish society in the 1930s, ethnic Kurds have sought greater political, linguistic, and cultural rights through both peaceful and armed means. Reporting in neutral or favorable terms about the PKK—considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United Nations, the European Union, and the United States—has itself been interpreted by Turkish authorities as a terrorist activity.

Authorities used anti-terror laws, for example, to prosecute Irfan Aktan, a veteran journalist for the biweekly *Express*, after a 2009 piece noted that PKK members were skeptical of government changes geared toward greater cultural rights for Kurds. In June, an Istanbul court sentenced the journalist to 15 months in prison and fined his editor, Merve Erol, 16,660 Turkish liras (US\$10,393). Aktan was free in late year pending appeal. Vedat Kurşun, editorial manager of *Azadiya Welat*, faced a much harsher fate: He was sentenced in May to 166 years and six months' imprisonment on charges of spreading propaganda for the PKK. The charge stems from *Azadiya Welat* articles that were supportive of imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, describing him as a "martyr" and "leader of the Kurdish people." Defense lawyer Meral Danış Beştaş said Kurşun had expressed a point of view as a journalist that did not constitute a crime, the Turkish press freedom group Bia reported.

Kurşun was one of at least four journalists behind bars in Turkey when CPJ conducted its annual census of imprisoned journalists on December 1. All were charged under anti-terror laws with spreading propaganda for the PKK. "The Kurdish issue continues to be taboo," Bia analyst Erol Önderoğlu told CPJ. "Whether they are mainstream or opposition Kurdish media, they are being convicted and given prison sentences because of their publications."

Covering alleged human rights violations against the Kurdish population constituted another redline, as reflected in the case of Jake Hess, a 25-year-old American journalist and contributor to the Inter Press Service. On August 11, Hess was detained in the southeastern province of Diyarbakir after he was named in an indictment against a minority-rights

group. Defense lawyer Serkan Akbas told CPJ that Hess wrote articles in July and August detailing alleged Turkish army violations against Kurds, including arson attacks and violence against women. Hess was deported after nine days in custody and banned from re-entering the country.

Authorities have also routinely prosecuted journalists on insult charges contained in the penal code. Haci Bogatekin, owner and editor of the biweekly *Gerger Firat*, was convicted in March on charges of insulting state prosecutors and sentenced to five years in prison. Bogatekin told CPJ that authorities targeted him after he published a January 2008 piece suggesting that Turkey faced a greater threat from a religious movement led by conservative author and cleric Fethullah Gülen than it did from the outlawed PKK. Bogatekin was free in late year pending appeal.

Journalists and editors from across the political spectrum were targeted for their coverage of the Ergenekon conspiracy. Büşra Erdal and Melih Duvakli, reporters for the pro-government *Zaman*, and Helin Şahin, a reporter for the pro-government *Star*, each faced multiple charges of violating state secrets in their coverage of the case, in which prominent military and political figures were accused of conspiring against the government.

The European Court ruled in September that Turkey failed to protect the life and free expression rights of the Turkish-Armenian editor Hrant Dink, who was shot outside his office in 2007 after receiving numerous death threats. Dink had angered ultranationalists by tackling identity issues of Turkish-Armenians, the Armenian origins of one of Atatürk's adopted daughters, and the role of Ottoman Turkey in the World War I killings of Armenians. Dink told authorities that he had received death threats, but the European Court found that "none of the three authorities informed of the planned assassination and its imminent realization had taken action to prevent it." The court also ruled that "no effective investigation had been carried out into the failures which occurred in protecting the life" of the editor. As 2010 drew to a close, nearly four years after Dink's assassination, the government had yet to obtain a conviction in the case.

Accused gunman Ogun Samast and two alleged accomplices remained in custody in late year, while several police, intelligence, and military officials faced charges of negligence in the case. In October, Samast's lawyer persuaded a court to have his client tried as a juvenile offender, a change opposed by Dink's lawyers. Samast was 17 when he allegedly carried out the killing.

Journalists and human rights defenders welcomed the European Court's ruling, noting that the Dink murder casts a dark cloud over the government's commitment to press freedom and the rule of law. The Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it would not contest the European

Court's ruling and that authorities would take measures "to prevent reoccurrence of such violations," The Associated Press reported. They have much work to do to prevent ongoing threats: Özgüt Topsakal, a reporter for the daily *Evrensel*, reported receiving an e-mailed photo of Dink's body in August after writing an article criticizing Turkish leaders.

Throughout the year, Turkish authorities pursued a tax investigation against a leading news corporation, the Doğan Media Group. The probe, launched after Doğan outlets ran pieces that were unfavorable to the ruling Justice and Development Party, was seen by many as politically motivated. Doğan Media Group owns newspapers such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet*, and *Radikal*, along with more than 30 television stations. The government has claimed unpaid taxes equivalent to US\$3.8 billion.

Speaking at a business forum in October, President Abdullah Gül acknowledged the high number of court cases brought against journalists, although he stopped short of urging specific reforms. "I am sure that all of these cases will be sorted out once they are tried at court," the press freedom group Bia quoted him as saying. Turkey continued to raise its regional profile in the meantime. In April, the government offered to mediate between Iran and the international community in the dispute over Tehran's nuclear program. In July, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad affirmed Turkey's role as the key mediator between Syria and Israel, telling Turkish reporters that "other countries can play only a supportive role." And in November, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Beirut to mediate an impasse between Lebanese political factions.

Yemen

The government pursued a widening array of repressive tactics, prompting many journalists to say that press freedom conditions had reached their lowest point since the unification of the country's north and south in 1990. Authorities continued to use long-standing practices of extrajudicial abduction, intimidation, threats, and crude censorship to control the news media. But as CPJ documented in a September special report, President Ali Abdullah Saleh's government was also erecting an elaborate legal structure to further restrict coverage and provide a veneer of legitimacy for its actions.

The cabinet pushed an aggressive legislative agenda in parliament that, if passed, would set prohibitive financial barriers for broadcast and online news outlets, expand the definition of criminal defamation

to include virtually any form of criticism of the president, and increase prison terms for so-called press offenses—in some cases, up to 10 years. The proposals came a year after the establishment of a Specialized Press and Publications Court, which has already heard dozens of criminal cases against journalists.

Many of the government's anti-press actions have been carried out under the guise of national security. Following a failed Al-Qaeda attempt to blow up a commercial airliner en route to the United States in December 2009—a plot allegedly conceived in Yemen—world attention turned to this small, strategic country on the Arabian Peninsula. In January, high-level officials from two dozen regional and Western governments met in London to discuss ways to help Sana'a combat terrorism. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton vowed that international assistance would not focus solely on security concerns but would also address human rights and rule of law. But Saleh's government failed to undertake human rights improvements, and the international community did not hold it accountable. The government's redlines, the unwritten but firmly established prohibitions against certain topics, extended into many areas of critical international interest: the war with Houthi rebels in the north, the repression of the largely peaceful Southern Movement, the failure to contain Al-Qaeda, and the widespread corruption within the country's top leadership.

"The justification of combating terrorism has given the authorities an opportunity to expand the numerous security services, and this has diminished the role played by society, particularly journalists," Mohammed al-Mekhlafi of the Yemen Observatory for Human Rights told CPJ during a research mission to Yemen in July. Others expressed similar concerns. "The West and particularly the United States are all eyes on terrorism, and the government is taking advantage of this situation," said Jamal Amer, a 2006 CPJ International Press Freedom Award winner and editor of the weekly *Al-Wasat*.

The government introduced three legislative proposals that would impose severe additional restrictions on free expression. In early year, Minister of Justice Ghazi al-Aghbari submitted to parliament amendments to the penal code as well as the Press and Publications Law. The government also put forward a new law to regulate broadcast and online media. All three proposals were pending in parliament in late year.

The penal code proposal would make it more difficult for opposition media, political parties, and political and social critics to speak out, CPJ's review found. Prison terms would be increased—in some cases, doubled—for publishing material deemed as "false," denigrating Islam, or insulting to the president, high-ranking officials, or foreign heads of state. The

proposed amendments would also define these perceived offenses more loosely. Small fines would be replaced with uncapped monetary penalties.

Proposed changes to the Press and Publications Law were also contentious. Abdel Bari Taher, former head of the Yemeni Journalists' Syndicate, noted in the independent weekly *Al-Nidaa* that the bill “retains all the drawbacks and defects of the old law, while preserving criminal articles and expanding them.” If passed, the amended press law would extend existing content restrictions to online media—a sector that has largely eluded government interference—and extend licensing requirements that now pertain to publications to individual journalists and vendors.

TOP DEVELOPMENTS IN YEMEN

KEY STATISTIC

- ▣ Special press and security courts are used to silence probing journalists.
- ▣ Redlines bar critical coverage of civil unrest, terrorism, corruption.

29

Days that reporter Abulelah Shaea was held incommunicado after being seized by security agents.

The government also introduced a bill to regulate television and radio broadcasters, online publications, and mobile news services. The Audio-Visual and Electronic Media Bill was depicted by the government as a liberalization measure that would promote private media ownership in a country where all television and radio stations are state-owned. But CPJ's review of the proposed legislation shows it would impose such exorbitant registration fees that private broadcasters would be deterred. At the same time, the bill would impose licensing fees and extend state regulation to online outlets that now operate without such burdens. Article 33 states that online media—including news delivered via SMS, or short message service, on mobile phones, a sector dominated by private outlets—would be subjected to state control through a regulatory framework to be imposed by executive order.

Dozens of journalists were subjected to politicized court proceedings, frequently on antistate charges. In January, the Specialized Press and Publications Court sentenced Anisa Othman, a contributor to the independent weekly *Al-Wasat*, to three months in prison on charges of “insulting the president” in connection with 2007 articles about corruption. In May, the same court sentenced Hussein al-Laswas, editor of the news website *Sana'a Press*, to one year in prison on charges of “undermining national foundations, the revolution, and the republic.” Both journalists retreated

to remote areas to avoid imprisonment, but they halted their journalistic work.

Uncertainty surrounded many criminal cases against journalists. In May, amid much publicity, Saleh issued what he called a “pardon” of all journalists. Although pardons typically apply only to those who have been convicted of crimes and have exhausted their appeals, a number of journalists facing pending charges were released from custody in the ensuing days. But no official explanation of the president’s “pardon” was issued, and no formal court orders followed. At least three journalists told CPJ that their criminal cases had gone dormant, but the charges had not been formally dismissed. Others said they had received contradictory information as to the status of their criminal charges. Official ambiguity is likely intentional: Several journalists with pending charges told CPJ that they were keeping a low profile in their professional work so as not to have their cases revived.

Authorities continued to use extrajudicial abduction and incommunicado detention. Mohamed al-Maqaleh, editor of the Yemeni Socialist Party news website *Aleshteraki*, was the target of a government-sponsored abduction in September 2009. After denying for five months that it was holding al-Maqaleh, the government finally disclosed in early 2010 that the journalist was indeed in state custody. Al-Maqaleh then faced criminal proceedings in two separate courts, including the special press court, before the cases were discontinued without resolution. He told CPJ that it was not clear whether the charges were actually dismissed or if they remain pending. The journalist had produced damning coverage of government airstrikes that killed close to 100 civilians and injured hundreds more in the ongoing war with Houthi rebels in the northwestern Saada region.

In July, armed men in civilian clothing snatched Abulelah Shaea, a freelance reporter and an expert on Islamist groups, off a busy Sana’a street in front of hundreds of onlookers and took him to an undisclosed location. The journalist was released within 24 hours, but not before being threatened and made to sign a document he was not allowed to read. He told CPJ that his coverage of national security issues put him on a collision course with authorities. Shaea was seized again in August, and held incommunicado for 29 days before being presented in court. He was vaguely accused of “planning to carry out terrorist acts” and “providing media support to Al-Qaeda leadership,” according to news reports. Journalists and lawyers who saw him in court reported seeing evidence that he had been abused. He remained in custody when CPJ conducted its annual worldwide census of imprisoned journalists on December 1.

On August 26, uniformed police attacked journalists covering a protest against extrajudicial detentions in front of the chief prosecutor’s office in

Sana'a. Al-Hurra correspondent Hassan Abed was beaten after refusing to surrender his camera and another journalist was roughed up for using her mobile phone to take pictures of the protest, journalists told CPJ. At another protest on September 1, this time in front of the president's offices, police barred Al-Jazeera and Al-Hurra camera operators from filming. Censorship also occurred in March, when authorities confiscated equipment that enabled Al-Jazeera and Al-Hurra to beam live footage from restive southern Yemen. The equipment was eventually returned.

The government continued to enforce a crude publishing ban against *Al-Ayyam*, an Aden-based independent daily run by the influential Bashraheel family. *Al-Ayyam*, once the country's highest-circulation publication, reaching more than 70,000 readers, was shut down during a violent government siege in 2009.

Police and security personnel surrounded *Al-Ayyam*'s compound again in January after journalists from a variety of outlets organized a sit-in outside the banned daily's offices. Again, the confrontation ended in violence as government forces used machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades against the compound. Hisham Bashraheel, the paper's editor-in-chief, and his two sons, sports editor Hani and executive manager Mohammad, were taken into custody. Hisham was held for three months on numerous antistate charges, including "instigating separatism" and "inciting violence," while Hani and Mohammad were held for four months apiece on charges of "forming an armed gang" in relation to the January confrontation. The cases were pending in late year.

In September, following a research mission to Yemen, CPJ released a special report on the deterioration of press freedom in the country. Government officials refused to meet with CPJ during the trip, and did not respond to written inquiries. After the report received extensive media coverage, Yemen's official news agency published a brief story claiming CPJ's findings were "incorrect and distorted." It did not elaborate.

Attacks and developments throughout the region

Algeria

- » In September, police detained Lahcen Tigbadar and Mohamed Slimani, journalists for the Moroccan weekly *Assahra Ousbouiya*, according to news reports. They were held for four days in the southwestern town of Tindouf, where they had been reporting on the conditions faced by refugees from the Western Sahara, a territory in dispute between Morocco and the Algerian-backed Polisario Front. After their release, the two journalists said Algerian authorities had wanted to prevent them from covering “the disastrous situation” in the Tindouf refugee camps, the official Moroccan news agency Maghreb Arabe Presse reported.

Bahrain

- » In May, the Ministry of Culture and Information ordered the Bahrain bureau of satellite news channel Al-Jazeera to halt operations “for having violated professional norms and for failing to observe laws and procedures regulating journalism, printing and publishing,” according to the official Bahrain News Agency. The decision came a day after Al-Jazeera aired a program about poverty in Bahrain. The day the ban was announced, authorities denied entry to an Al-Jazeera crew that had traveled to Bahrain to interview a former U.N. official about poverty in the country, according to news reports. The ban on bureau operations remained in effect in late year.
- » On August 27, Public Prosecutor Ali al-Buainain banned journalists from reporting on the detentions of dozens of opposition activists in a series of arrests that month. Among those detained were at least two bloggers: Abduljalil Alsingace, who had tracked human rights issues for the opposition Haq Movement of Civil Liberties and Democracy, and Ali Abdel Imam, the founder of the news website *BahrainOnline*. Both were standing trial in late year on charges of forming an illegal organization, engaging in terrorism, and spreading false information. They remained in custody along with numerous opposition activists.

Jordan

- » The Court of Cassation, Jordan’s highest judicial authority, ruled in January that the government could extend the restrictive Press and

Publications Law to news websites and other online media. The law allows authorities to impose fines or prison terms for material deemed insulting to religions or defamatory to the government, national unity, or the economy. Jordanian online outlets have typically reported more openly than other media, CPJ research shows.

- » Facing outcry from CPJ and others, the government backed off some of the most restrictive aspects of new legislation on cyber-crime. The initial version, approved by the cabinet of ministers in August, had included broad restrictions on material deemed defamatory or involving national security. The measure also allowed law enforcement officials to conduct warrantless searches of online outlets. By month's end, in response to local and international pressure, the government removed provisions allowing warrantless searches, more precisely defined national interests, and deleted provisions that singled out online journalists for special regulation. The revised measure—which regulated a wide-ranging set of digital matters—was signed into law by King Abdullah II in September.

Kuwait

- » In January, the Ministry of Information proposed restrictive amendments to the press law and the audio-visual law. The amendments would set harsher penalties for slander and defamation and impose criminal penalties for speech that “threatened national unity.” The proposals would also double, to two years, the existing prison penalty for blasphemy. The amendments prompted an outcry from Kuwaiti journalists who issued a statement urging the government to reject the amendments. The law was pending in parliament in late year.
- » Mohammed Abdulqader al-Jassem, founding editor of the Arabic editions of *Foreign Policy* and *Newsweek*, was prosecuted twice during the year. In May, he was charged with “instigating to overthrow the regime,” “slight to the personage of the emir,” and acting to “dismantle the foundations of Kuwaiti society.” The charges stemmed from articles critical of the Kuwaiti government and the ruling al-Sabah family that were published on his personal website. A court in Kuwait City acquitted the journalist of all charges in September. Just two months later, however, al-Jassem had been arrested again, this time on defamation charges related to coverage of the prime minister. He was sentenced to three months in prison.
- » More than 150 assailants broke into the Kuwait City offices of the privately owned Scope TV in October, ransacking the premises and

destroying equipment, according to news reports. Mohammed Talal al-Saeed, executive manager of Scope TV, told Reuters the assailants were armed with pistols and knives and that 10 people were injured. The attack occurred after the station aired a talk show that some found insulting to the Kuwaiti ruling family. Fajr al-Saeed, owner of Scope TV, told CPJ she started receiving death threats after the show aired. Station lawyer Faisal Ayal al-Anzai told CPJ that prosecutors summoned only two people for questioning in the attack. He said the station was able to resume broadcasting but damages were significant.

Libya

- » Mohamed al-Sarit, a correspondent for the Tripoli-based *Mal wa Aamal* magazine and *Jeel Libya* news website, suffered serious injuries after four unidentified assailants stabbed him on a Benghazi street in August. Al-Sarit was hospitalized with 33 stitches on his neck, back, and wrist, news reports said. The journalist told Radio Netherlands that he had been harassed by government agents after his article detailing poverty in the oil-rich nation was published online. One suspect was briefly detained but released.
- » In November, authorities arrested 20 journalists working for Libya Press, a news agency controlled by Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, the news organization said. The arrests were seen as part of a long-standing power struggle within Libya's ruling elite. The journalists were released without charge three days later at Muammar Qaddafi's direction. The agency shut its Tripoli offices in December after concluding it could not protect staffers from "intensified security harassment," according to a statement posted on its website.

Mauritania

- » The National Assembly passed legislation in July that could allow the country's first private radio and television licenses to be issued. Licenses would be granted by the minister of information based on criteria to be set by the cabinet. Houssein Meddou, head of the Journalists' Syndicate in Mauritania, said the legislation provides overly broad powers to the information minister. All domestic radio and TV are government-owned.

Saudi Arabia

- » In May, Jamal Khashoggi resigned from his post as editor-in-chief of

Al-Watan, one of the most progressive dailies in the kingdom. The journalist's resignation came just days after the newspaper published a piece criticizing Salafism, a conservative school of Sunni Islam. Khashoggi said he was stepping down "to focus on personal projects," but colleagues speaking to Agence France-Presse and the BBC said they believed that the decision was made because of high-level governmental pressure. Mahmoud Sabbagh, a columnist at *Al-Watan*, said, "There was a lot of pressure lately aimed at deterring the progressive stance of *Al-Watan's* opinion section."

- » Fahd al-Jukhaidib, a reporter for the daily *Al-Jazirah*, was sentenced in October to two months in prison and 50 lashes for inciting the public to protest against a series of electric power reductions, according to news reports. In an article published in September 2008, al-Jukhaidib described frequent power cuts in Qubba in northern Saudi Arabia. The article also described a protest in front of the government-owned electricity company. Al-Jukhaidib was free on appeal in late year.
- » The Ministry of Culture and Information was preparing legislation that would regulate online publications, according to news reports. The measure would require online publications to register and obtain licenses from the ministry. The bill caused an outcry after initial news reports said that bloggers and Web forum users would be required to register. In September, Abdel Rahman al-Hazzaa, a spokesperson for the ministry, said the license requirement would not apply to bloggers, according to Agence France-Presse. The bill was pending before King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz in late year.

Syria

- » Freelance journalist Maan Aqil was released in February after spending three months in prison. The journalist was not charged or convicted of a crime, but his detention apparently stemmed from a 2009 report published by the news website *Kuluna Shuraka* that detailed alleged corruption in private and government-owned pharmaceutical factories, according to local human rights groups. Aqil said authorities told him not to work as a journalist or travel outside the country.
- » Ali al-Abdallah, a freelance journalist, was in custody in late year despite having completed a 30-month prison sentence. Due for release on June 17, he was informed by military prosecutors that he would face new accusations of publishing false information and undermining national security, his son told CPJ. The charges stemmed from an article the journalist smuggled out of prison that was critical of

Wilayat al-Faqih, a religious form of government advocated by Iranian Shiite leaders. Iran is a close ally of Syria.

- » Blogger Tal al-Mallohi was held throughout 2010 after security forces summoned her for questioning in December 2009, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported. Two days after her disappearance, security agents searched her house and confiscated her computer, Reuters reported. Ten months after she was detained, authorities accused her of spying for the United States, the newspaper *Al-Watan* reported, citing an unnamed security source. Al-Mallohi's blog was devoted to Palestinian rights and was critical of Israeli policies. It also discussed the frustrations of Arab citizens with their governments and what she perceived to be the stagnation of the Arab world.

United Arab Emirates

- » The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority announced in August that it planned to suspend BlackBerry messenger, e-mail, and Web-browsing services in the country until the "applications were in full compliance with UAE regulations." The authority made the threat in an attempt to obtain unrestricted access to the contents of BlackBerry communications, including those of journalists who use the device. While the threat was never carried out, UAE's stance prompted other countries to demand similar access, including Saudi Arabia, India, and Indonesia.



Journalists Killed

As Bombings Spread, Pakistan Was Deadliest Nation

Amid a rash of suicide attacks, Pakistan became the world's deadliest country for the press in 2010, with at least eight journalists killed in connection with their work, constituting a significant portion of the worldwide death toll.

At least 44 journalists were killed around the world in 2010, with Iraq, Mexico, Honduras, and Indonesia also ranking high for journalism-related fatalities, CPJ's analysis found. The worldwide toll reflected a notable drop from 2009, when a massacre in the Philippine province of Maguindanao drove the number of work-related deaths to a record 72. CPJ is investigating 31 other deaths in 2010 to determine whether they were work-related.

Internet-based journalists constitute an increasing portion of CPJ's death toll. At least six journalists who worked primarily online were killed in 2010. Internet journalists rarely appeared in CPJ's death toll until 2008, when online reporters doing front-line investigative work began to be targeted with violence.

Murder was the leading cause of work-related deaths in 2010, as it has been in past years. But murders composed about 60 percent of deaths in 2010, lower than the rate of 72 percent seen over the past two decades. Deaths in combat-related crossfire and in dangerous assignments such as street protests constituted a larger portion of the 2010 toll than usual. Suicide bombings and crossfire in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand, and Somalia accounted for the unusually high proportion.

Six of the eight fatalities in Pakistan were caused by suicide attacks or crossfire during militant strikes. On successive days in April, Samaa TV lost cameraman Malik Arif to a bombing at a Quetta hospital and correspondent Azamat Ali Bangash to a bomb attack targeting a refugee camp near Orakzai. Suicide attacks were a scourge for the Pakistani press throughout the year. More than two dozen other Pakistani journalists were injured in such attacks in 2010, CPJ research showed.

Raging anti-press violence in Mexico claimed the lives of numerous

Photo: Photographers work before a memorial service for Reuters cameraman Hiro Muramoto, who was killed in political unrest in Bangkok. (Reuters/Michael Caronna)

journalists during the year. CPJ confirmed that three journalists were killed in direct relation to their work, and it continues to investigate the circumstances surrounding seven other deaths. The victims included Luis Carlos Santiago, a photographer for the Ciudad Juárez newspaper *El Diario* who was gunned down while on assignment. His murder prompted the paper to publish an extraordinary editorial addressed directly to the drug cartels that control the city. “What do you want from us?” the editorial asked in its headline, noting later, “You are, at this time, the de facto authorities.”

About 90 percent of victims worldwide were local reporters covering issues that affected their communities. Among them was Sardasht Osman, an Iraqi reporter who was seized from a street in Arbil and then murdered after describing alleged corruption in the Kurdistan Regional Government.

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*Nine in 10 victims are local journalists
covering their communities.*

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Five international journalists were killed in connection with their work. Fabio Polenghi, an Italian freelance photographer, and Hiro Muramoto, a Japanese cameraman for Reuters, were killed in crossfire between Thai security forces and anti-government protesters. In July, a CPJ investigation concluded that both government troops and demonstrators engaged in recklessness that led to the two deaths. CPJ also found that the government had done little to investigate the killings.

Belarusian editor Aleh Byabenin was among the online journalists on CPJ's death toll. Founder of the pro-opposition news website *Charter 97*, he was found dead in his summer house outside Minsk. Authorities declared the death a suicide without addressing questions about the extensive injuries found on his body or the absence of a suicide note or motive. *Charter 97*, whose coverage was critical of the government, was the target of cyber-attacks and government raids, while its staffers endured repeated death threats.

Long-term CPJ research shows that about 90 percent of journalist murders go unsolved. In Honduras, a CPJ investigation found that authorities had been careless and inattentive in investigating a string of nine journalist murders, at least three of which were work-related. Among the victims was Nahúm Palacios Arteaga, a provocative television anchor who was ambushed by multiple gunmen outside his home. Honduran authorities conducted virtually no investigation in the aftermath, taking no photographs and collecting no evidence at the crime scene. Only after the case drew

international attention, months later, did authorities exhume the body to conduct an autopsy.

Anti-press violence spiked in Indonesia, where at least three journalists were murdered in relation to their work. In one case, the badly bruised body of Alfrets Mirulewan was found on a remote Maluku Islands beach two days after the editor went missing while reporting a story on alleged unlawful fuel sales.

CPJ has been waging a Global Campaign Against Impunity, focusing on Russia and the Philippines, two nations with high rates of unsolved journalist murders. No work-related murders were reported in Russia in 2010, although one journalist was severely beaten during the year. In September, after meeting with a CPJ delegation, Russian investigators reopened several unsolved journalist murders cases from prior years.

Two journalists were murdered in the Philippines in 2010, continuing a pattern of anti-press violence. In September, prosecutors began trying the first 19 defendants in the Maguindanao case, but a CPJ investigation identified numerous problems that could thwart justice: Witnesses were intimidated, local police did not cooperate with prosecutors, and forensic evidence was compromised.

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Across Iraq, five journalists are killed amid persistent insecurity.

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While Pakistan moved to the forefront of dangerous conflict zones, journalists continued to be killed in Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan. Deaths in Iraq, after plummeting in 2008, appear to have leveled off amid persistent insecurity. Five Iraqi journalists were killed during the year, an increase of one from 2009. More than 20 journalists had been killed in each year from 2004 to 2007, a rate unprecedented in CPJ history.

The death toll dropped in Somalia, where two local journalists were murdered or killed in combat situations. While declining from the nine deaths recorded in 2009, the toll does not likely reflect an improvement in the security situation. At least 59 Somali journalists have fled into exile in recent years, according to CPJ research, and journalists who remain in the country practice extensive self-censorship to survive.

The victims reflected the breadth and diversity of global journalism, working in all media and covering topics from war to sports to crime. They included James P. Hunter, a U.S. Army staff sergeant filing stories for

military publications, who was killed by an explosion while covering patrols in Afghanistan. Togolese sports reporter Stanislas Ocloo was killed when militants in Angola ambushed a bus carrying his country's Africa Cup soccer team. And Brazilian radio reporter Francisco Gomes de Medeiros was shot in front of his home after exposing the activities of drug traffickers.

Here are other trends and details that emerged in CPJ's analysis:

- Broadcast reporters constituted 40 percent of the victims, the largest single professional category. That's a departure from long-term CPJ data that show print reporters as the single largest category.
- One journalist died in prison in 2010. Cameroonian editor Germain Cyrille Ngota Ngota was jailed after he and other journalists asked a presidential aide about alleged misuse of state oil company funds. Although an initial death certificate faulted prison officials for neglect, the government denied responsibility.
- Four media support workers were killed worldwide, three of them in a bomb blast that destroyed the Baghdad offices of Al-Arabiya television.
- At least five journalists were reported missing during the year, three in Mexico and one apiece in Sri Lanka and Ukraine.
- Nine freelance journalists were among the 2010 victims, a number consistent with past years.
- Among the murder victims, more than 60 percent had reported receiving threats in the weeks before they died. Long-term CPJ research shows that physical attacks are often preceded by phone or electronic threats.
- Other places with media fatalities included Nigeria, Yemen, Colombia, India, Greece, Lebanon, Uganda, and Rwanda.

CPJ began compiling detailed records on all journalist deaths in 1992. CPJ staff members independently investigate and verify the circumstances behind each death. CPJ considers a case work-related only when its staff is reasonably certain that a journalist was killed in direct reprisal for his or her work, in crossfire, or while carrying out a dangerous assignment.

If the motives in a killing are unclear, but it is possible that a journalist died in relation to his or her work, CPJ classifies the case as "unconfirmed" and continues to investigate. CPJ's list does not include journalists who died from illness or were killed in accidents—such as car or plane crashes—unless the crash was caused by hostile action. Other press organizations using different criteria cite higher numbers of deaths than CPJ.

44 Journalists Killed: Motive Confirmed

Afghanistan: 2

JANUARY 10, 2010, NEAR NAWA

Rupert Hamer, *Sunday Mirror*

Hamer, a veteran war correspondent, was killed and *Sunday Mirror* photographer Philip Coburn was injured while embedded with a U.S. Marine unit. The journalists were traveling in an armored vehicle when it was hit by a roadside bomb. A U.S. Marine was also killed.

The U.K.-based *Sunday Mirror* said the two journalists had left Britain on New Year's Eve to cover the U.S. troop increase in Afghanistan. Hamer, 39, had been employed by the paper for a dozen years and was making his fifth trip to Afghanistan, the *Mirror* said. He had also covered the war in Iraq. He was survived by a wife and three children.

The Marines were on patrol near Nawa, in the southern province of Helmand, where U.S., British, and Canadian troops had squared off against Taliban fighters ahead of an expected U.S. military offensive.

JUNE 24, 2010, KANDAHAR

James P. Hunter, *The Fort Campbell Courier*

Hunter, 25, was a staff sergeant and journalist with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. He was killed by an improvised explosive device while covering his unit's foot patrols in Kandahar. He was the first Army journalist killed in action in Afghanistan since U.S. military operations began in October 2001, according to CPJ research.

Hunter would escort visiting journalists at times, but Kimberly Warren, editor of *The Fort Campbell Courier*, who worked with Hunter for about three years, said he frequently filed stories and photographs for her paper. *The Courier* serves troops stationed at Fort Campbell (on the border of the U.S. states of Kentucky and Tennessee) and the base's surrounding civilian communities. The Associated Press

quoted Hunter's colleagues as saying that he also wrote, edited, and designed a monthly magazine. Hunter was on his first deployment to Afghanistan when he was killed. He had served twice in Iraq, Warren said.

In a column in *The Courier*, Warren wrote: "As Hunter's editor, I knew what he enjoyed to do and what he was good at doing. I was able to read every word that Hunter wrote and look at every fantastic photo that he took over the past three years we worked together. I can tell you he truly loved to do stories during his deployments. He loved to be out on the front lines with the soldiers."

Angola: 2

JANUARY 9, 2010, CABINDA PROVINCE

Stanislas Ocloo, Télévision Togolaise

Ocloo, 35, a contributor to sports programs on Togo's national broadcaster Télévision Togolaise (TVT), was one of two passengers killed when hooded gunmen opened fire on a bus carrying the Togolese soccer team through the restive northwestern enclave of Cabinda at the start of the 2010 Africa Cup of Nations. Assistant coach Abalo Amelete was also killed, and nine people were injured in the attack.

TVT presenter Blaise Amedodji, who appeared with Ocloo on a weekly sports program, told CPJ that the journalist had planned to interview African soccer stars during the tournament hosted by Angola.

Two rival factions of the separatist Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) each claimed responsibility for the attack, which occurred about 15 minutes after the team bus crossed into Cabinda from neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. The oil-rich enclave had seen a low-level insurgency since 1975. Angolan authorities announced the arrests of two suspects in connection with the attack, which forced Togo to pull out of the tournament.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2010, LUANDA

Alberto Graves Chakussanga, Radio Despertar

Chakussanga, 32, presenter of a weekly current affairs program on private Radio Despertar, was shot in his home in the Viana district of the capital, Luanda, according to local journalists and news reports. Money, a cell phone, a car, and other belongings appeared to be intact,

although a tank of cooking gas was missing, Radio Despertar Editor-in-Chief Armando Ferramenta told CPJ.

Radio Despertar, which has ties to the opposition National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, had been critical of the government led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. Chakussanga was the host of a call-in program in Umbundu, the language of the Ovimbundu, Angola's largest ethnic group, whose central highland homeland is an opposition stronghold, according to local journalists. In January, he began airing discussions on "political and electoral education," according to Ferramenta. In recent months, he reported to friends that he had received anonymous threatening phone calls and text messages, Ferramenta said.

No arrests were immediately made. Commenting on the murder at a September 7 press conference, ruling party spokesman Rui Falcão said "we have no idea what happened" but accused Radio Despertar of inciting civil disobedience in the region. Chakussanga was survived by a wife and four children, the youngest of whom was born on the day he was killed, Ferramenta said.

Belarus: 1

SEPTEMBER 3, 2010, NEAR MINSK

Aleh Byabenin, *Charter 97*

Byabenin, 36, founder and director of the Minsk-based pro-opposition news website *Charter 97*, was found hanged in a stairway in his summer house outside the capital, Minsk. The journalist's brother discovered the body after Byabenin stopped responding to phone calls.

Authorities immediately said the journalist had committed suicide after drinking heavily, an account Byabenin's colleagues disputed. *Charter 97* staffers told CPJ that Byabenin had left no suicide note, was in excellent health, and had just returned from a family vacation in Greece. Dmitry Bandarenko, a friend who saw the body, told CPJ that Byabenin's right ankle was badly wrenched and that he had unexplained bruises on his left hand, chest, and back. Bandarenko and others said it appeared that police had conducted only a cursory investigation at the scene.

Facing media criticism and protests from Byabenin's colleagues, prosecutors acknowledged a week later that the editor could have been murdered. Authorities reopened the investigation but announced in

December that they had found no evidence of foul play. CPJ and other media groups called for an independent investigation.

Byabenin's website had long been at odds with authorities. *Charter 97* often reported on government wrongdoing, including human rights abuses, corruption in the security services, and opposition activities. Its coverage had been met with police interrogations of journalists, confiscation of equipment, politicized audits, and debilitating cyber-attacks. Shortly before his death, Byabenin agreed to participate in the presidential campaign of an opposition candidate, Andrei Sannikov.

Brazil: 1

OCTOBER 18, 2010, CAICÓ

Francisco Gomes de Medeiros, Radio Caicó

A gunman on a motorcycle shot Gomes, 46, at least five times in front of his home in the Paraíba neighborhood of Caicó, Rio Grande do Norte state, news reports said. The journalist, shot around 9 p.m., was pronounced dead at a local hospital.

A day after the murder, state police arrested a man identified as João Francisco dos Santos, local news media reported. Police said dos Santos had admitted killing Gomes in reprisal for the reporter's coverage of his 2007 armed robbery conviction. Despite the suspect's reported statement, state police said they were still investigating the case and had not ruled out further leads. In an interview with the Natal-based daily *Tribuna do Norte*, state prosecutor Geraldo Rufino said he believed that dos Santos was a hired assassin. Brazilian media quoted Gomes' relatives and friends as saying they believed drug traffickers had ordered the killing.

In December, investigators said dos Santos had been hired by Vladimir Souza do Nascimento, a convicted felon serving a prison sentence for drug trafficking. News reports quoted investigators as saying that Gomes' coverage had hindered criminal activities being run by Souza from prison. Prosecutors requested that Souza be prosecuted for masterminding the murder, news accounts said.

Gomes, news director of local broadcaster Radio Caicó, had reported on a variety of local topics, including government corruption, crime, and drug trafficking, according to local news accounts. He also published stories on a personal blog. In September, Gomes broke a story on vote-tampering in Rio Grande do Norte while covering the

Brazilian general elections. The story, which described local politicians buying votes in exchange for crack cocaine, was picked up nationwide, according to *Portal Imprensa*, a São Paulo-based news site focused on press issues. Soon after the piece aired, Gomes received anonymous death threats, news reports said.

Cameroon: 1

APRIL 22, 2010, YAOUNDÉ

Germain Cyrille Ngota Ngota, *Cameroon Express*

Ngota, 38, editor of the private bimonthly *Cameroon Express*, died in his cell in Kondengui Prison, where he was being held on charges of falsifying a government document. He had been arrested in February based on a criminal complaint from top presidential aide Laurent Esso.

The case began when Ngota and journalists with three other publications jointly sent a series of questions to Esso, secretary-general of the presidency and chairman of the state-run oil company SNH, along with a copy of a document that had been leaked to them. Their questions centered on whether 1.3 billion CFA francs (US\$2.6 million) had been improperly paid to three SNH managers as “commissions” in the purchase of an offshore service ship, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. The accompanying document purported to be a June 2008 confidential memorandum signed by Esso that described the payments. (Esso did not publicly comment on the allegations and did not respond to CPJ’s requests for a response.)

On February 5, intelligence agents arrested Ngota along with Harrys Robert Mintya of the weekly *Le Devoir*, Serge Sabouang of the bimonthly *La Nation*, and Simon Hervé Nko’o of the weekly *Bebela*. Agents with the Directorate-General of External Intelligence pressed the journalists for their source of the 2008 memo, holding them each for several days, the journalists later told colleagues. By February 25, news reports said, judicial police had charged the journalists with falsifying a government document. Nko’o had gone into hiding by that time, but the others were rearrested and sent to Kondengui Prison.

Ngota died on April 22 from “abandonment, improper care” and the authorities’ “failure to render assistance,” according to a prison doctor’s initial death certificate, which his family shared with local

journalists. A 15-year veteran of the press, Ngota was the first journalist to lose his life in the line of duty in Cameroon since CPJ began documenting media casualties in 1992.

CPJ and other groups immediately called for an independent investigation into the death. President Paul Biya did order a judicial police inquiry “independent of the executive” but appeared to immediately predetermine its result. Biya asserted the case was “not a matter of restriction of freedom of the press,” according to news reports, and that Ngota had died of poor health. The ensuing government inquiry was riddled with irregularities.

Just two days after Biya’s announcement, Communications Minister Issa Tchorama Bakary said Ngota had tested positive for HIV and had died from its complications—a claim disputed by Ngota’s widow. Tchorama said the findings were based on a second medical examination of Ngota’s body, which he said had been held in the presence of the journalist’s family—a claim denied by Ngota’s brother, Bruno Ntede, according to Agence France-Presse. Félix Cyriaque Ebolé Bola, a local journalist invited by the government to be an independent witness at the examination, told CPJ that he had been given the wrong address and didn’t make it to the exam.

In September, Justice Minister Amadou Ali presented the findings of his agency’s inquiry into the death, which absolved authorities of any responsibility. The National Union of Cameroonian Journalists and Ngota’s family criticized the investigation as opaque—relatives were never consulted or apprised of its progress—and inherently conflicted because the same judicial police conducting the inquiry were involved in the initial arrests of the four journalists.

Colombia: 1

MARCH 19, 2010, MONTERÍA

Clodomiro Castilla Ospino, *El Pulso del Tiempo*

Castilla, 50, editor and publisher of the local newsmagazine *El Pulso del Tiempo*, was shot by an unidentified gunman in the northern city of Montería, according to local news accounts. The journalist was reading a book outside his house around 9 p.m. when the attacker shot him at least eight times, the press said. A second man picked up the attacker and they reportedly fled on a motorcycle. Castilla died at the scene.

Castilla, who also contributed to the local radio station La Voz de Montería, had received threats for at least four years in relation to his coverage of links between local politicians, landowners, and illegal right-wing paramilitary groups, local journalists told CPJ. In July 2008, the journalist testified before the Colombian Supreme Court on links between members of the National Congress and paramilitary groups.

Shortly before his death, Castilla covered a court ruling against the owner of the Montería newspaper *El Meridiano* in a land dispute case, according to the national daily *El Tiempo*. The daily said the journalist had also reported on allegedly unlawful use of state funds in 2006 congressional political campaigns.

The government provided protection to Castilla from 2006 to 2009 because of threats against his life, the local Foundation for Freedom of the Press (FLIP) said. In November 2009, the Ministry of Interior withdrew the protection based on an intelligence review that indicated Castilla was no longer under threat, according to FLIP.

Local authorities did not disclose possible motives or suspects, according to local press reports. Then-President Álvaro Uribe Vélez condemned the killing and offered a reward of 50 million Colombian pesos (US\$26,000) for information, local press reports said. On March 26, the federal attorney general's office took over the investigation.

Tania Castilla Florez, the journalist's daughter and a witness in the case, fled Montería in April after she and her family were followed several times.

Greece: 1

JULY 19, 2010, ILIOUPOLIS

Sokratis Giolias, Thema Radio, *Troktiko*

Two unidentified men in police uniforms shot and killed Giolias, 37, director of Thema Radio and contributor to the popular news website *Troktiko*, news reports said. The killers lured Giolias out of his apartment in Ilioupolis, a suburb of Athens, around 5 a.m., claiming his car was being stolen, and shot him more than a dozen times, according to news reports.

The Associated Press said forensic experts had collected 16 bullet

casings from the murder scene that Athens police said matched two 9 mm handguns used by a local radical group called Sect of Revolutionaries, which formed during widespread rioting over a police shooting of a teenage boy in December 2008. Athens police also found the burned remnants of a sedan they believed was the killers' getaway car, AP reported.

The BBC, quoting Giolias' colleagues, said the reporter had been working on a corruption-related story, the details of which were not clear. Panos Sobolos, president of the Athens Journalists' Union, said that Giolias was murdered because he "had stepped on a lot of toes with his stories," Reuters reported. Thema Radio is a news and entertainment broadcaster; *Troktiko* often covered controversial social and political issues.

Honduras: 3

MARCH 1, 2010, TEGUCIGALPA

Joseph Hernández Ochoa, Channel 51

Hernández, 26, an entertainment journalist and host for Tegucigalpa-based Channel 51, was driving colleague Karol Cabrera home when two unidentified gunmen fired on them in a neighborhood known as El Chile, press reports said. Hernández, shot several times, died at the scene. Cabrera, a host with private station Radio Cadena Voces, was hospitalized with gunshot wounds to the left arm, news reports said.

News accounts suggested that Cabrera had been the target of the attack. Cabrera, who hosted a television show on state-owned Channel 8 during the interim government of Roberto Micheletti, said she believed supporters of ousted leader Manuel Zelaya were behind the attack, press reports said. Cabrera's daughter, Kathleen Nicole Rodríguez Cabrera, was fatally shot in December 2009 under similar circumstances, according to press reports.

Cabrera said she had received several anonymous death threats by phone before the shooting and had been assigned a police escort, press reports said. The officer was at Cabrera's home at the time of the attack, according to news reports.

Hernández hosted the program "Encuentros" on Channel 51 and was studying journalism at the National University of Honduras.

MARCH 11, 2010, LA CEIBA

David Meza Montesinos, Radio El Patio, Channel 45

Meza, 51, a renowned street reporter for several broadcast outlets, was killed after a car chase through the streets of La Ceiba, capital of Atlántida province on the northern coast, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Gunmen finally overtook and shot Meza on the doorstep of his home.

Colleagues said Meza specialized in helping people who had been mistreated by government or business. “This is a city of abuses,” said Julio César Rodríguez, La Ceiba correspondent for *La Tribuna*. “The government abuses the poor. The rich, the businesses abuse the poor. Even the middle classes take what they want from the people at the bottom. Who is to stop them? David Meza stopped them, and for years.”

Abrahám Mejía, who was Meza’s co-anchor on Channel 45, said Meza had recently criticized local police as corrupt and incompetent. Mejía said he believed police might have been behind the killing. “David thought he was too big to lose the fight,” Mejía told CPJ. “But the police can’t stand to be humiliated, not that way. So they had to react.” La Ceiba Police Chief José Ayala did not respond to CPJ messages seeking comment.

Mejía and Rodríguez acknowledged that their late colleague was known to extort money from sources. Meza’s family did not return messages seeking comment on the claim. Arrest warrants were issued in June for four suspects, but a local prosecutor told CPJ he would not discuss a motive or any other details. No arrests were reported.

MARCH 14, 2010, TOCOA

Nahúm Palacios Arteaga, Channel 5

Hit men lay in wait at the home of Palacios, 34, a well-known anchor for Channel 5, the main TV station in the Tocoa area, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Palacios arrived about 10 p.m. with a cousin in the backseat of a double-cabin 4×4 pickup, and his girlfriend, a doctor, in the passenger seat. Neighbors told local reporters that a few shots were initially fired, apparently by a lookout, followed by a fusillade of gunfire as other assailants joined in. Palacios died at the scene. Dr. Yorlenny Sánchez, badly injured, died two weeks later. Palacios’ cousin was not injured, local press reports said.

Several work-related motives emerged in a July 2010 CPJ investigation.

Palacios opposed the 2009 military-backed coup that ousted President Manuel Zelaya, and he had turned the TV station into an openly opposition channel, his colleagues said. Military personnel appeared at his house and detained him and his family for several hours in June 2009. That episode, along with other threats from the military, was serious enough that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued an order to the government of Honduras to protect Palacios. According to the commission, it was one of more than 400 such orders issued for journalists and activists in Honduras in 2009 and 2010.

The Honduran government was required by international treaty to follow the directives, but it appeared to have ignored most of them. The government asserted that it never received an order in the Palacios case, although the Inter-American Commission noted that it had a signed receipt from the Honduran Supreme Court.

In the months before his slaying, Palacios campaigned on behalf of a group of several thousand peasants who had been demanding vast tracts of land they said rightfully belonged to them. Peasant activists said some of their leaders had been abducted and disappeared, or singled out and killed.

Aside from the wide belief that Palacios' killing was politically inspired, some CPJ sources said he could have angered a local drug gang with a recent news story about a cartel-linked kidnapping. Sources also said that Palacios, like other Tocoa journalists, had been accused of extorting money from sources. Palacios' father, José Heriberto Palacios denied his son could have been dishonest. "They killed him because he was honest and was not corrupt," he told CPJ.

The case was marked by a series of investigative failures. Almost three months after Palacios was gunned down, a team of investigators came to his grave in his hometown of Rigores, dug up his body, and at the graveside, in the open, conducted an autopsy. The coroner never examined the body after the murder; it had gone straight from the murder scene to the funeral home. Investigators also started asking news photographers if they had any pictures of the crime scene because police had no photographs of their own. The prosecutor in charge of the case, Arody Reyes, conceded to CPJ that police had not retrieved any evidence from the scene.

Reyes said the exhumation and autopsy were suddenly important because the Honduran government had enlisted the help of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Local investigators, Reyes said, needed to show their U.S. counterparts something.

India: 1

JULY 20, 2010, ALLAHABAD

Vijay Pratap Singh, *Indian Express*

Singh, 36, a senior correspondent for the daily *Indian Express*, died of injuries suffered in a July 12 bombing. Singh was interviewing Nand Gopal Gupta, minister for institutional finance, when explosives concealed in a moped outside the minister's home were detonated, news reports said. The blast killed one other person and injured several others, including Gupta.

Indian media outlets reported that police in Uttar Pradesh had arrested two members of the local Samajwadi Party in the attack. The motive was said to be political and business rivalries. Police said they were unable to trace the owner of the secondhand moped used in the bombing, according to *Indian Express*.

Indonesia: 3

JULY 30, 2010, MERAUKE

Ardiansyah Matra'is, Merauke TV

A rescue team found the body of Matra'is near the Gudang Arang River, two days after his family reported him missing in Merauke, a small town on the southern tip of Papua province, according to news reports.

Matra'is, a reporter for the local broadcaster Merauke TV, had been covering plans for a large agribusiness development in Merauke, according to the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AIJ). With its potential for bringing wealth to the remote region, the project had led to a heated competition for the position of regional chief, Victor Mambor, chairman of AIJ's local branch, told the newsmagazine *Tempo*. Matra'is' death came in the run-up to local elections.

In the week before his death, Matra'is had received threatening text messages similar to those sent to at least three other local journalists, news reports said. The news website *Kompas* translated one threat as saying: "To cowardly journalists, never play with fire if you don't want to be burned. If you still want to make a living on this land, don't do weird things. We have data on all of you and be prepared for death."

Initial news reports said Matra's body showed signs of torture, although local police later denied finding signs of abuse. Matra's family declined to have an autopsy conducted, as is often the case in Islamic cultures.

AUGUST 21, 2010, TUAL

Ridwan Salamun, Sun TV

Salamun, 28, a correspondent for Sun TV, was covering violent clashes between local villagers in the southeastern Tual area of the Maluku Islands when he was stabbed repeatedly, according to local news reports. Salamun was filming when he was attacked, and his equipment was reported missing in the aftermath, according to the local Antara news agency.

Salamun was airlifted to a hospital in the provincial capital, Ambon, where he died of his injuries, according to news reports citing the Indonesian Television Journalists Association.

Tensions had been running high between residents of two Tual villages—Banda Eli and Fiditan—with clashes resulting in property damage, according to *The Jakarta Post*. Maluku police said they had arrested a resident of Fiditan who allegedly attacked Salamun because the journalist was a Banda Eli resident.

DECEMBER 17, 2010, KISAR

Alfrets Mirulewan, *Pelangi Weekly*

Mirulewan's body was found with apparent bruising on a remote beach in Kisar, one of the eastern Maluku Islands, according to *The Jakarta Globe* and other news accounts. He had been missing for two days.

Insany Syahbarwaty, a coordinator for the Maluku Media Center, a local support group, told *The Globe* that Mirulewan, 28, chief editor of the *Pelangi Weekly*, had been looking into allegations of unlawful fuel sales. Mirulewan was working on the story with a colleague from another publication when the two became separated while following a fuel truck, Syahbarwaty said. Mirulewan had also covered recent, sharply contested elections, *The Jakarta Post* said.

Police offered differing accounts regarding the condition of his body. One officer told the *Jakarta Post* that the body showed clear signs of assault; another attributed the condition to decomposition.

Iraq: 5

MAY 5, 2010, MOSUL

Sardasht Osman, freelance

Osman, 23, a contributor to the independent newspaper *Ashtiname* and news websites *Sbei*, *Awene*, *Hawlati*, and *Lvinpress*, was found shot to death in the northern city of Mosul, according to news reports.

Unidentified gunmen had seized Osman a day earlier on the campus of the University of Salahadin in Arbil, where he was a final-year English student, numerous witnesses told Metro Center, a local press freedom group. The assailants beat and dragged him into a car, Metro Center said.

Osman had received a number of threatening phone calls telling him to stop writing about the Kurdistan Regional Government and its officials, according to his brother Bashdar. In the month preceding his murder, Osman had written an article appearing in the Sweden-based *Kurdistan Post* that accused a high-ranking official of corruption.

In September, the Kurdistan Regional Government issued a 430-word report claiming that Osman had been killed by a member of Ansar Al-Islam, an extremist group, for not carrying out work he had promised to do. The report provided no evidence for the assertion. CPJ and other press groups said the report lacked credibility.

SEPTEMBER 7, 2010, BAGHDAD

Riad al-Saray, Al-Iraqiya

Al-Saray, 35, an anchor for state-owned Al-Iraqiya television, was killed when unidentified gunmen opened fire on his car in western Baghdad. He was gunned down about 6 a.m. while en route to Karbala in southern Iraq, according to news reports.

Al-Saray, who joined Al-Iraqiya in 2005, hosted religious-based programs that generally promoted reconciliation between Shiites and Sunnis, according to news reports and CPJ interviews.

Iraqi Vice President Adel Abd al-Mehdi called on police to solve the killing. “The murder of journalist Riad al-Saray requires urgent investigation by the security services to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice,” he said in a statement.

Al-Iraqiya, part of the state-run Iraqi Media Network, has had the

highest death toll of any media organization in Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion of 2003, CPJ research shows.

SEPTEMBER 8, 2010, MOSUL

Safa al-Din Abdel Hamid, Al-Mosuliya

Gunmen firing from a speeding car killed Abdel Hamid in front of his home in Mosul, according to news reports. Abdel Hamid was leaving for work at about 8 a.m. when the shooting occurred.

Abdel Hamid, a father of six, had worked less than a year at Al-Mosuliya, a private channel that covers Ninawa governorate in northern Iraq, according to Mohamed al-Malaki, a producer at the station. Abdel Hamid's program, "Our Mosques," detailed the history of historic religious sites in Mosul. Al-Malaki said he was unaware of any threats against Abdel Hamid. A day earlier, Al-Iraqiya anchorman Riad al-Saray, who also hosted religious-based programming, was gunned down in Baghdad.

OCTOBER 4, 2010, GARMA

Tahrir Kadhim Jawad, freelance

Cameraman Jawad, 27, was on his way to deliver footage to Baghdad, about 50 miles away, when a bomb attached to his car exploded, killing him instantly, according to local press freedom groups and news reports. Security forces initiated an investigation but made no arrests.

Jawad had worked as a journalist for seven years. He started his career as an editor with the weekly *Al-Karma* before becoming a freelance cameraman. The slain journalist was "a courageous cameraman" distinguished for getting footage "where others had failed," said Mohammad al-Jamili, Baghdad bureau chief for the U.S.-government funded Al-Hurra. Jawad contributed to Al-Hurra and a number of other prominent stations, local and international, filming sensitive topics and conflict areas.

DECEMBER 12, 2010, RAMADI

Omar Rasim al-Qaysi, Al-Anbar TV

Al-Qaysi, an anchor for the satellite station, was killed in a suicide bomb attack in central Ramadi that also wounded his brother, a fellow station staff member, according to news reports and the local press support group, the Journalistic Freedoms Observatory.

Al-Qaysi and his brother Mustafa, a cameraman, were walking to work at around 10 a.m. when a car bomb detonated at the gate to a government compound in central Ramadi, killing 13 and wounding as many as 40 others, news accounts and the journalism observatory said.

A sport utility vehicle tried to break through the gates of the government compound, exploding when it came under fire from guards, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. The bombing, coming amid a series of attacks, occurred as Iraqi leaders struggled to form a new government.

Uthman al-Mukhtar, an observatory representative, said Omar al-Qaysi covered sports and social issues.

Lebanon: 1

AUGUST 3, 2010, NEAR AL-ADAYSSEH

Assaf Abu Rahal, *Al-Akhbar*

Abu Rahal, 55, a reporter for the Lebanese daily *Al-Akhbar*, was killed during a border clash between Israeli and Lebanese military forces near the southern town of Al-Adaysseh, according to news reports.

He was struck by an Israeli shell after a skirmish broke out shortly after noon, news reports said. The fighting was apparently triggered by an Israeli tree-cutting operation along the border, according to news reports. Lebanese authorities claimed Israeli forces crossed the border during the operation, an assertion Israel disputed.

Abu Rahal had covered southern Lebanon for *Al-Akhbar* for four years, reporting extensively on the aftermath of the 2006 conflict between Israeli and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon, the newspaper said.

The fighting was the deadliest along the border since the 2006 conflict, according to news reports. Three Lebanese soldiers and one Israeli officer were killed in the clash, according to the BBC.

Mexico: 3

JANUARY 8, 2010, SALTILLO

Valentín Valdés Espinosa, *Zócalo de Saltillo*

Valdés, 29, a general assignment reporter for the newspaper, was abducted in downtown Saltillo after several men in two SUVs intercepted the vehicle in which he was riding with two colleagues. One reporter, who was not identified, was abducted with Valdés but later

freed. The third colleague was not forced into the vehicle.

The next morning, the Coahuila attorney general's office announced that Valdés' body had been found in front of the local Motel Marbella. He had been shot several times, his arms and legs had been bound, and his body showed evidence of torture. A handwritten message found alongside his body read: "This is going to happen to those who don't understand. The message is for everyone."

The state attorney general's office told local reporters that an organized criminal group was behind the murder. Local reporters told CPJ that Valdés was most likely targeted because of a December 29, 2009, story about military raids at the Motel Marbella. The story, which ran without bylines, identified a leader of the Zetas criminal group as being arrested in one of the raids. Information about the cartel leader's capture was reported by Valdés, CPJ sources said. It was considered a message from the cartel that the reporter's body was left at the motel.

The newspaper did not press authorities for a thorough investigation, its editor, Sergio Cisneros, acknowledged. "We are not going to get mixed up in it," he told CPJ. "I don't believe there will be results, so why push?" Cisneros said investigators did not search the newsroom or Valdés' computer.

SEPTEMBER 16, 2010, CIUDAD JUÁREZ

Luis Carlos Santiago, *El Diario*

Santiago, 21, a photographer with the local daily *El Diario*, and intern Carlos Sánchez Colunga, 18, were shot by unidentified gunmen in the parking lot of a shopping mall in the border city of Ciudad Juárez, according to news accounts. Santiago died at the scene of the 2:45 p.m. shooting. Sánchez was hospitalized with serious injuries.

The two were using a car that belonged to lawyer and human rights activist Gustavo de la Rosa, who lived in the United States, said a spokesman for the Chihuahua state prosecutor's office. *El Diario* reported that Santiago and Sánchez had borrowed the car from de la Rosa's son, an editor at the paper, to attend a photography workshop at the mall. Officials were investigating whether de la Rosa was the intended target, the prosecutor's spokesman said.

Santiago was the second *El Diario* journalist killed in as many years, CPJ research shows. A day after Santiago's death, the paper published an unusual, widely covered editorial. Addressing the cartels directly, it said *El Diario* would willingly compromise its news coverage in order to preserve its reporters' lives.

NOVEMBER 5, 2010, MATAMOROS

Carlos Alberto Guajardo Romero, *Expreso Matamoros*

Guajardo, 37, was killed during crossfire between military forces and drug traffickers in the border city of Matamoros, news reports said. Gulf cartel leader Antonio Ezequiel Cárdenas Guillén was among those killed in the confrontation.

A crime reporter with the local daily *Expreso Matamoros*, Guajardo left home around 11 a.m. to cover the confrontation in the Fraccionamiento Victoria neighborhood, news reports said. His pickup was reportedly shot at least 20 times as he was heading for the Secretariat of Homeland Security to gather more information. National news outlets said army officers had fired at the journalist's unmarked truck because they mistook him for one of the gunmen involved in the shooting.

The military had waged a major operation targeting Cárdenas Guillén. The army deployed 150 soldiers, three helicopters, and 17 vehicles, according to a government statement. Three soldiers and four other gang members were killed, the government said.

Nigeria: 2

APRIL 24, 2010, JOS

Sunday Gyang Bwede, *The Light Bearer*

Nathan S. Dabak, *The Light Bearer*

Deputy Editor Dabak, 36, and reporter Bwede, 39, journalists for the monthly newspaper of the Church of Christ in Nigeria, were driving to an assignment when they were attacked by a mob in Jos, capital of central Plateau state, according to the local chapter of the Nigerian Union of Journalists and news reports.

Light Bearer Editor-in-Chief Gyarta Pofi told CPJ that the two journalists had chartered a motorcycle to travel to a scheduled interview with national parliamentarian Bitrus Kaze concerning ongoing outbreaks of deadly violence between Muslims and Christians in the area. Dabak and Bwede were stabbed by Muslim youths reacting to the discovery of a slain Muslim individual near a church, Katdapba Gobum, chairman of the local journalist union branch, told CPJ.

Pakistan: 8

APRIL 16, 2010, QUETTA

Malik Arif, Samaa TV

Cameraman Arif was killed in a suicide bombing at a local hospital, news reports said. The blast occurred outside the emergency ward of Civil Hospital in Quetta, capital of restive Baluchistan province, killing at least eight people and injuring numerous others, including five journalists. The journalists were covering a Shiite demonstration outside the hospital, where a prominent local Shiite bank manager had been taken after an attack.

APRIL 17, 2010, ORAKZAI

Azamat Ali Bangash, Samaa TV

Bangash, 34, a cameraman and correspondent for Samaa TV, was killed in a suicide bombing while covering food distribution in a refugee camp near Orakzai, in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas near the border with Afghanistan. He was the second Samaa journalist killed in a suicide bombing in two days.

As many as 47 refugees from fighting in northwest Pakistan died when a pair of suicide bombers, striking minutes apart, attacked a distribution line, news reports said. The BBC and CNN said the Sunni group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility for the explosions, which specifically targeted Shiite refugees. The bombing was one of five in northwest Pakistan that took place between April 14 and April 17, 2010. Bangash, who died at a nearby field hospital, was survived by a wife and three children.

MAY 9 OR 10, 2010, NEAR WAHI PANDHI

Ghulam Rasool Birhamani, *Daily Sindhu Hyderabad*

The body of Birhamani, 40, a reporter for the *Daily Sindhu Hyderabad*, was found outside his hometown of Wahi Pandhi, Sindh province, on May 10, a day after he had been reported kidnapped. The Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and the media support group Pakistan Press Foundation reported that his body was badly scarred and showed evidence of torture.

Birhamani's family believed he was killed because of his reporting on ethnic issues in Sindh province, the journalists union said. A colleague

told the newspaper *Dawn* that Birhamani's story on the marriage of a 12-year-old girl to a 22-year-old man might have been the specific trigger for the attack. Birhamani had received threats from members of the Lashari tribe just days before he was seized, the press foundation said.

Hundreds of journalists turned out for a march to protest his killing. *Dawn* quoted some of the demonstrators as saying that police were reluctant to investigate because of political sensitivities. The journalists union said Birhamani had worked for many years for various Sindhi-language dailies. He left behind a wife, two sons, and a daughter.

MAY 28, 2010, LAHORE

Ejazul Haq, City-42 TV

Haq, 42, a technician for the local Lahore cable station, was killed while working at the scene of an armed attack on a Muslim minority Ahmadi mosque, according to news accounts and CPJ interviews.

Haq was reporting live via cell phone from the scene, which was in his neighborhood. Colleagues said the shots that struck him could be heard on the air. It was not clear who fired the fatal shots during the fighting, in which Sunni gunmen and suicide bombers attacked the mosque while police and military groups engaged them in close fire.

Pakistani media reports said Haq was survived by a wife, a daughter, and a son. An eight-year veteran of the broadcast industry, he had worked for City-42 for the previous three years, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

The mosque was one of two Ahmadi mosques that came under attack that day. More than 80 people were killed in the sieges, which lasted for several hours. The events were covered live by many of Pakistan's news channels.

SEPTEMBER 6, 2010, QUETTA

Ejaz Raisani, Samaa TV

Cameraman Raisani died in a military hospital of gunshot injuries he suffered three days earlier while covering a rally that turned violent in Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's restive Baluchistan province, according to local and international news reports.

A suicide bomber detonated explosives aimed at a Shiite demonstration, triggering gunfire and other violence that killed more than 60

people and left another 185 injured, including several other journalists, news reports said. The Pakistani Taliban and the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi each claimed responsibility for the bombing, one in a series of recent assaults on Shiite gatherings, local news reports said. Some news reports linked the violence that followed the Quetta bombing to surviving protesters.

Police took 12 suspects into custody, and Baluchistan Chief Minister Nawab Aslam Raisani formed a judicial tribunal to investigate, *The Express Tribune* reported.

SEPTEMBER 14, 2010, HANGU

Misri Khan, *Ausaf* and *Mashriq*

Khan, a newspaper reporter and head of the local journalists association, was shot several times as he entered the press club building in Hangu, a volatile town near the border with Afghanistan, according to news reports and the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. Shahid Sabir, news editor for the Urdu-language daily *Ausaf*, said two or more assailants had apparently been lying in wait.

Khan was a reporter for *Ausaf*, as well as *Mashriq*, an Urdu-language daily published in Peshawar, provincial capital of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province (the former North West Frontier Province). Khan was also president of the Hangu Union of Journalists.

The English-language *Dawn* reported that Khan had received threats from militant organizations. Khan had been a journalist for more than 20 years, reporting for several newspapers during his career, according to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. He was survived by a wife, six sons, and five daughters.

DECEMBER 6, 2010, GHALANAI

Pervez Khan, Waqt TV

Abdul Wahab, Express News

Wahab and Khan were among 50 people killed in a double-suicide bomb attack in Pakistan's Mohmand tribal district near the restive border with Afghanistan, according to international news reports.

The journalists were covering a meeting of tribal leaders and government officials in Ghalanai, the administrative center of the region, when two suicide bombers wearing police uniforms detonated explosives. News reports said the meeting was called to discuss the formation of an anti-Taliban militia. Agence France-Presse said a

Pakistani Taliban group took credit for the attack.

The journalists worked as both cameramen and reporters. More than 100 people were wounded in the attack, among them Mohib Ali, a reporter for the news agency News Network International, according to the Pakistan Press Foundation.

Philippines: 2

JUNE 14, 2010, MANAY

Desidario Camangyan, Sunrise FM

Camangyan was shot from behind at close range while hosting an amateur singing contest, according to local and international news reports. He died at the scene from a single shot to the head in front of an audience that included his wife and 6-year-old son, news reports said. Police said the gunman escaped on foot.

Camangyan was an anchor for local radio station Sunrise FM in the provincial capital, Mati City. The Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, a local press freedom group, told CPJ that Camangyan and his two co-hosts had received threats in connection with their commentaries on illegal logging in Mindanao's Davao Oriental province. The trio had jointly reported on the issue for their "Hotline Patrol" program for four consecutive weeks before Camangyan's murder, the center reported. Camangyan had also campaigned for the incumbent mayor of Mati, Michelle Rabat, in general elections the month before, according to local news reports.

On June 21, murder charges were filed against two suspects, police officer Dennis Jess Lumikid and Romeo Antoling, a local village official, according to the local *Sun Star* newspaper. Antoling had invited Camangyan to host the contest, news reports said. Witnesses, including Camangyan's wife, Ruth Matinong, helped police identify the suspects, according to news reports. Lumikid was indicted in a Mati regional court, but charges against Antoling were dropped after prosecutors failed to show sufficient evidence, the *Sun Star* reported.

JUNE 16, 2010, NEAR BACCARA

Joselito Agustin, DZJC

Two gunmen on motorcycles shot Agustin four times as he was returning from work near the northern town of Baccara late on the evening of June 15, according to local and international news reports.

Agustin, who was driving, had a passenger, his nephew, who suffered a leg wound, according to the reports. The journalist was taken to a local hospital but died the next morning, the news reports said.

The 37-year-old radio broadcaster was known for on-air commentaries criticizing official corruption, according to news reports.

Nick Malasig, a DZJC colleague, said Agustin had received text message death threats in the weeks before his murder, according to The Associated Press and the local press freedom group Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility. On May 7, Agustin's house was sprayed with gunfire by unidentified assailants, according to news reports. Nobody was injured in that attack, the reports said.

Agustin had also reported on local election irregularities, including the disqualification of candidates, according to the media center. Malasig said his colleague had suspected a local politician was behind the May assault on his house, the center told CPJ.

On June 21, police filed murder charges against Pacific Velasco, newly elected vice mayor of Baccara, aide Leonardo Banaag, and two other suspects, according to the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. In his radio commentaries, Agustin had spoken out against Velasco, who had been convicted in a recent graft case, the *Inquirer* reported. Agustin's nephew identified Banaag as the gunman, the *Inquirer* reported.

Rwanda: 1

JUNE 26, 2010, KIGALI

Jean-Léonard Rugambage, *Umuwugizi*

A gunman shot Rugambage, acting editor of the independent tabloid *Umuwugizi*, twice in the neck as he drove through the gate of his home in the Nyamirambo district of the capital, Kigali, around 10 p.m., Rwanda National Police spokesman Eric Kayiranga told CPJ. Rugambage died at Kikiru Hospital, he said.

Local journalists told CPJ that Rugambage had been preparing to join *Umuwugizi* Editor Jean-Bosco Gasasira in exile after reporting to friends and colleagues that he was being followed and had received phone threats. Rugambage was the last *Umuwugizi* journalist remaining in Rwanda after the state-run Media High Council suspended the paper from publication during the run-up to the August 2010 presidential election. Gasasira told the U.S. government-funded Voice of America that he believed the killing was reprisal for a recent

Umuvugizi story alleging government involvement in the shooting of a former Rwandan army commander in South Africa.

Days after the killing, security forces rounded up two suspects and lodged murder charges. Speaking at a press conference, Internal Security Minister Moussa Fazil Harelimana said one of the suspects “admitted guilt. ... He told the police he committed the act to take revenge against this journalist, who killed his brother in the 1994 Tutsi genocide,” Agence France-Presse reported. The suspects were convicted on homicide charges in November, but journalists expressed deep skepticism about the government’s case.

In 2007, a traditional “gacaca” court had cleared Rugambage of any involvement in the genocide, according to local journalists. Rugambage had been the target of official persecution over several years because of his critical coverage of the government, CPJ research showed. While working as a reporter for the now-defunct independent tabloid *Umuco*, Rugambage was imprisoned for 11 months in 2005-06 over a story alleging mismanagement and witness tampering in Rwanda’s traditional courts.

Rugambage, 34, was survived by a wife and a 2-year-old daughter, according to local journalists.

Somalia: 2

MAY 4, 2010, MOGADISHU

Sheikh Nur Mohamed Abkey, Radio Mogadishu

Three gunmen shot Abkey, a veteran Radio Mogadishu journalist, near his home in the southern Mogadishu district of Wardhigley. Local journalists said Abkey’s body, found in an alleyway, also showed evidence of torture.

Journalists at state-run Radio Mogadishu said they had received phone calls from the Al-Shabaab insurgency claiming responsibility for the murder. Radio Mogadishu journalists believed Abkey was killed simply because of his affiliation with the government-run station.

Abkey, said to be in his early 60s, served as a researcher and staff trainer for the station. He joined the profession in 1988 as a reporter for the former Somali National News Agency and had worked for several media houses in Mogadishu, including HornAfrik Radio, the Somali Television Network, and East Africa Radio, the National Union of Somali Journalists reported.

Colleagues said he refused to be intimidated by the warring factions in Mogadishu and rebuffed suggestions that he live at the station for security reasons. Abkey was survived by a wife and four children.

AUGUST 24, 2010, MOGADISHU

Barkhat Awale, Hurma Radio

Awale, 60, director of the community station Hurma Radio, was on the roof of the station helping a technician fix a transmitter when he was struck in the abdomen by a stray bullet from nearby fighting, local journalists told CPJ. His colleagues took him to Madina Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Awale's death came during intense fighting between Al-Shabaab insurgents and African Union troops, local journalists told CPJ. Earlier that day, at least 33 people were killed when two suicide bombers detonated explosives at the Muna Hotel, near the presidential palace, according to a statement from Information Minister Abdirahman Omar.

Awale had worked in news media for 30 years and was director of Hurma Radio for the past four years, the National Union of Somali Journalists reported. Hurma Radio primarily covered social issues, local journalists told CPJ. The station, based in a government-controlled area, had been off the air recently due to technical problems. Awale was survived by a wife and three children.

Thailand: 2

APRIL 10, 2010, BANGKOK

Hiro Muramoto, Reuters

Muramoto, 43, was shot in the chest in Bangkok's Old Town area while covering armed clashes between security forces and red-shirted protesters with the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship, or UDD, according to news accounts and CPJ interviews.

A 15-year Reuters veteran based in Tokyo, Muramoto was pronounced dead at a Bangkok hospital. He was one of two foreign journalists killed during violent political unrest that gripped the capital for several weeks. Fabio Polenghi, an Italian freelance photographer, was killed in crossfire in May.

A Reuters investigation, which drew on information from two unidentified witnesses, found that Muramoto "was shot almost certainly

by a high-velocity bullet fired at street level while standing in a street between Thai troops and red shirt protesters.” A summary of the Reuters inquiry, reviewed by CPJ, said that Muramoto “was not shot at close range” and that “both troops and protesters had high-velocity weapons at the time of Hiro’s death and there were casualties on both sides that night.” The findings contradicted initial government assertions that Muramoto had been shot by a UDD sniper positioned on a nearby rooftop.

By December, Thailand’s Department of Special Investigation was focusing on security forces as the likely source of fire. Reuters, quoting from a leaked department report, said the death “was caused by a high-velocity bullet as gunfire flashed from the direction of soldiers.”

MAY 19, 2010, BANGKOK

Fabio Polenghi, freelance

Polenghi, 48, an Italian freelance photographer, was struck by gunfire on the morning of May 19 while reporting on military operations to dislodge anti-government demonstrators from an elaborate protest site, a CPJ investigation found. He was one of two foreign journalists killed during violent political unrest that gripped the capital for several weeks. Hiro Muramoto, a Japanese cameraman for Reuters, was killed in crossfire in April.

Bradley Cox, a Bangkok-based documentary filmmaker, said that earlier on the morning of May 19, troops fired sporadically from behind a barricade into areas 200 meters away that were controlled by red-shirted protesters for the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship, or UDD. Cox, interviewed for a CPJ special report, said both he and Polenghi had taken footage of a protester shot in the leg around 10:45 a.m.

About 15 minutes later, Cox said, sensing a lull in the shooting, he moved away from a barricade controlled by the UDD and into a nearly empty road to investigate a commotion among protesters approximately 30 to 40 meters away. Cox said Polenghi followed a few steps behind. While running down the road, Cox felt a sudden, sharp pain in the side of his leg. It turned out that a bullet had grazed his knee, causing minor injury. When he turned to look back in the direction of the troops, he saw Polenghi sprawled on the ground about two or three meters behind him. Polenghi was wearing a blue helmet with the word “Press” written across the front and back, and a green armband indicating that he was a working journalist.

“My feeling at the time was that we were shot at the exact same time, perhaps even with the same bullet,” said Cox, adding that he didn’t hear the gunshot or shots that hit him or Polenghi. “I don’t know who shot me or Fabio, but if the military was trying to shoot red shirts, there was no one around us. ... Soldiers were firing at anything or anybody.”

Video footage Cox subsequently took of journalists and protesters who carried Polenghi’s body out of the road and onto a motorcycle bound for a nearby local hospital appeared to show a bullet had entered Polenghi’s body under his left armpit and exited through his side. He was declared dead on arrival at a local hospital, according to news reports. Authorities did not report any bullet being recovered.

Polenghi’s family expressed concerns about the government’s opaque investigation into the death. His sister, Elisabetta Polenghi, noted that many of his belongings, including his camera and telephone, were missing. She and a group of Polenghi’s colleagues pieced together video clips—some received from journalists who were in Polenghi’s vicinity, others downloaded from unknown sources on the Internet—to develop a timeline of movements before and after the shooting. There was no known footage of the shooting itself. One video clip showed that an unidentified man wearing a silver helmet was the first to reach Polenghi after he was shot. The brief footage showed him feeling around Polenghi’s chest and briefly jostling with his camera, while another unidentified man wearing a yellow helmet knelt and took a photograph.

Government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn did not respond to questions from CPJ on the Polenghi shooting, including the assertion that soldiers had been firing indiscriminately.

Uganda: 1

SEPTEMBER 11, 2010, NEAR KALISIZIO

Paul Kiggundu, TOP Radio and TV

Motorcycle taxi drivers beat freelance journalist Kiggundu, 32, while he was filming them demolishing a house in a town outside Kalisizio in southwest Uganda, according to local reporters and the Ugandan Human Rights Journalist Network. Kiggundu died of internal bleeding before he could receive treatment at Kalisizio Government Hospital.

Local journalists told CPJ that the drivers, commonly known as boda-boda, had targeted the home of a fellow driver, whom they had accused of murder and robbery. No arrests were disclosed in either attack.

Kiggundu had worked for several months as a contributor to the private, Christian-oriented TOP (Tower of Praise) Radio and TV. He sent reports from the Rakai district for both the radio and TV station, local journalists said. He was survived by a wife and two young children, local journalists told CPJ.

Yemen: 1

FEBRUARY 13, 2010, BENI QAIS

Muhammad al-Rabou'e, *Al-Qahira*

Five individuals burst into Muhammad al-Rabou'e's home in the district of Beni Qais, in Yemen's northern province of Hajja and shot him multiple times, according to Al-Jazeera and other news outlets. Al-Rabou'e, 34, a reporter for the monthly *Al-Qahira*, had written several articles about the activities of a reputed criminal group.

Police arrested five members of the Aouni family in connection with the slaying. The Ben Qais security chief, Abdelrazaq Azzaraq, told CPJ that the suspects—Ahmad Aouni and four of his sons—had carried out the murder in retaliation for the reporter's coverage of their alleged criminal activities, including accusations of child trafficking.

The reporter had received several death threats in connection with his articles about the Aouni family, according to *Al-Qahira* Editor-in-Chief Muhammad Darman. The five suspects were previously arrested on charges of assaulting al-Rabou'e in December 2009, but prosecutors did not pursue charges in court.

Al-Rabou'e worked as a journalist in Beni Qais for 11 years and covered multiple corruption cases in the course of his career.

4 Media Workers Killed

Iraq: 3

JULY 26, 2010, BAGHDAD

Mohamed Abd al-Kareem Hadi al-Bayati, Al-Arabiya

Amira Hatem, Al-Arabiya

Aysar Mahmoud Hamid Zankana, Al-Arabiya

Security guards al-Bayati and Zankana and custodian Hatem were killed when a suicide bomber detonated explosives in a vehicle in front of Al-Arabiya offices at about 9:25 a.m.

The bureau was destroyed, said Tareq Maher, an Al-Arabiya journalist who was inside the building during the blast. The head of the army's explosives unit, Maj. Gen. Jihad al-Jaabari, told Al-Arabiya that the car was carrying about 280 pounds (128 kilograms) of ammonium nitrate.

The New York Times reported that Al-Qaeda in Mesopotamia claimed responsibility for the bombing, saying it was in response to a critical Al-Arabiya report about the group's influence. Hatem, a mother of five and a longtime member of the Al-Arabiya staff, had survived a 2003 attack on Al-Arabiya's Baghdad bureau, according to the station's website.

Pakistan: 1

SEPTEMBER 3, 2010, QUETTA

Mohammad Sarwar, Aaj TV

Sarwar, a driver for Aaj TV, died in violence that ensued after a suicide bomber detonated explosives at a rally in Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan, according to local and international news reports. Sarwar was shot in the head and chest, local news reports said.

The suicide bombing targeted a Shiite demonstration, triggering gunfire and other violence that killed more than 60 people and left another 185 injured, including several other journalists, news reports said. The militant groups Pakistani Taliban and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi each claimed responsibility for the bombing, one in a series of assaults on Shiite gatherings, local news reports said. Some news reports linked the violence that followed the Quetta bombing to surviving protesters.

Police took 12 suspects into custody, and Baluchistan Chief Minister Nawab Aslam Raisani formed a judicial tribunal to investigate the attack, news reports said.

31 Journalists Killed: Motive Unconfirmed

Afghanistan: 1

SEPTEMBER 5, 2010, KABUL

Sayed Hamid Noori, Radio Television Afghanistan

Noori, 45, a prominent television journalist, was stabbed to death near his Kabul home, according to international news reports. On the night of the murder, Noori received a series of phone calls that prompted him to leave his apartment, Khalilullah Dastyar, deputy Kabul police chief, told Agence France-Presse. The journalist's body was found in a tree-covered area near his home, police said.

Noori worked for state-run Radio Television Afghanistan and held leadership positions in various journalist groups, news reports said. In 2004, he served as spokesman for President Hamid Karzai's main political rival, Mohammad Yunus Qanooni, and he continued to back groups that opposed Karzai's policies, AFP reported.

Argentina: 1

SEPTEMBER 4, 2010, BUENOS AIRES

Adams Ledesma Valenzuela, *Mundo Villa* and Mundo Villa TV

Ledesma, 41, a Bolivian-born reporter for the community weekly *Mundo Villa* and director of local TV station Mundo Villa, was stabbed by unidentified assailants near his home in the shantytown Villa 31 in northern Buenos Aires, local and international press reported. Ledesma wrote mostly about neighborhood problems, such as unsanitary conditions and damaged roads, in Villa 31, *Mundo Villa* Editor Joaquín Ramos told CPJ.

The journalist's wife, Ruth Marlene Torrico, told CPJ that a woman had approached her at the murder scene and warned that something similar might happen to her and her six children if they didn't leave

the neighborhood. Two women approached her sister the following day and made similar threats, she said. Torrico filed a complaint with the federal police, and authorities assigned agents to patrol near the family's home. Argentine authorities did not immediately identify suspects or disclose possible motives.

Bulgaria: 1

JANUARY 5, 2010, SOFIA

Bobi Tsankov, freelance

At least two gunmen opened fire on Tsankov, 30, author of a book and newspaper articles on reputed crime figures, and two other men on busy Aleksandur Stamboliiski Boulevard in downtown Sofia around 12:30 p.m. Tsankov died at the scene, while the other two men—identified by the daily *Dnevnik* as Tsankov's bodyguards—were hospitalized with gunshot wounds. Sofia prosecutor Nikolai Kokinov told reporters that 15 bullet casings had been found at the crime scene.

Late the same day, a Ministry of Internal Affairs task force arrested two reputed crime bosses, Stefan (“Sako,” or “the Jacket”) Bonev and Krasimir Marinov, local press reports said. Authorities said they were also seeking Marinov's brother, Nikolai. Krasimir Marinov was freed January 17 but ordered not to leave the country.

Authorities said they suspected the Marinov brothers of ordering the murder but offered no information as to the motive or the gunmen, according to local press reports. The news website *Mediapool*, citing unofficial sources, said Tsankov was to testify in court against the Marinov brothers in a money-laundering case.

From September 2009 until days before his murder, Tsankov wrote a series of articles in the tabloid *Weekend* that purported to reveal the activities of Bulgarian crime figures, according to local press reports. The latest article, published January 1, alleged that reputed crime boss Meto Ilienski had ordered the killing of a rival, Zhoro Iliev.

Tsankov had made similar accusations in November 2009 on the popular Nova Televiziya show “Goreshto” (Hot). The show's host, Veneta Raikova, said she had talked with Tsankov the day before he was killed to discuss details of another appearance, the Sofia News Agency reported. Raikova said she understood Tsankov was going to reveal details about the recent killings of three other Bulgarian crime chiefs, the news agency reported.

One of the suspects, Bonev, was arrested in November 2009 after allegations he had threatened Tsankov during and after a wild car chase through the streets of Sofia. At the time, the journalist said Bonev had told him not to publish anything about Ilienski. Bonev was freed on bail after the 2009 episode.

In his book *The Secrets of the Gangsters*, published in December 2009, Tsankov claimed to have had close relationships with several crime bosses who were killed in recent years. He was preparing a new book about the activities of a drug-trafficking group, press reports said.

A former Viva Radio host, Tsankov gained notoriety several years earlier after a number of people accused him of taking money for advertising that he did not air, according to press reports. In June 2006, a Sofia court convicted Tsankov of fraud and gave him a three-year suspended sentence, the daily *24 Chasa* reported.

China: 1

DECEMBER 28, 2010, KUITUN

Sun Hongjie, *Northern Xinjiang Morning Post*

Reporter Sun died in a hospital in Kuitun, Xingiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 10 days after being beaten by several assailants at a construction site, news reports said. At least six young men attacked Sun at the site, where the reporter had gone to meet a source.

Authorities dismissed journalism-related motives, saying the attack stemmed from an online dispute involving a social media acquaintance of Sun. The official account, carried widely in state-sanctioned media, was greeted with skepticism in unofficial online media. Colleagues said Sun often wrote stories critical of the local government, including recent reporting on the demolition of a factory to make way for housing for local party leaders.

Colombia: 1

OCTOBER 14, 2010, CALOTO

Rodolfo Maya Aricape, Radio Payumat

Two gunmen shot Maya, a journalist and a leader of the local indigenous community, in his home in rural Caloto in southwest Cauca

province, according to the Bogotá-based Foundation for Freedom of the Press (FLIP) and CPJ interviews.

Maya, 34, was a correspondent for Radio Payumat, a community radio station that is part of a network operated by the Association of Indigenous Councils in Norte del Cauca (ACÍN). Maya covered political issues and the civil conflict in the region, according to Jorge Arias, an ACÍN representative. Maya's newsgathering activities were closely tied to his role as an indigenous leader, Arias said.

Two weeks before the murder, graffiti in Caloto accused Maya and other indigenous leaders of being members of the leftist guerrilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), CPJ sources said. No police investigation had been initiated as of early December, local authorities told CPJ. Arias said indigenous officials were conducting an investigation of their own.

Democratic Republic of Congo: 1

APRIL 5, 2010, BENI

Patient Chebeya, freelance

Armed men in military uniforms surrounded Chebeya, 35, in front of his house around 10 p.m. in the volatile eastern city of Beni, according to the local press freedom group Journaliste En Danger (JED). Chebeya surrendered his cell phones, videotapes, and money and pleaded for his life, but the gunmen fired several point-blank shots, his wife, a witness, told JED.

Chebeya, a father of four, was returning from a recording studio where he had been editing video footage when he was gunned down, according to local journalists. Authorities immediately arrested two military officers in connection with the killing, and a third on a related weapons charge. A military tribunal tried, convicted, and sentenced the officers within 12 days. The proceedings, which resulted in death sentences for two suspects and a five-year prison term for the third, did not shed light on a motive for the crime or on the circumstances, according to local journalists.

Local human rights defenders said they were concerned by the haste with which the proceedings were conducted. Chebeya's widow said the suspects did not match the appearance of the killers, an assertion that prompted JED to call for a retrial. Authorities had been criticized before—notably in the 2007 slaying of journalist Serge Maheshe—for

rushing journalist murder cases to trial and trumping up charges against innocent defendants.

Honduras: 6

MARCH 26, 2010, BETWEEN CATACAMAS AND JUTICALPA

Manuel Juárez, Channel 4, Radio Excélsior

José Bayardo Mairena, Channel 4, Radio Excélsior

Juárez, 54, and Mairena, 52, were driving from the city of Catacamas to Juticalpa, in the province of Olancho, when gunmen intercepted their car and fired at least 26 times, according to local press reports and CPJ interviews. Mairena died at the scene, and Juárez was pronounced dead at a hospital in Juticalpa, news reports said.

The two worked together on news and talk programs, typically avoiding sensitive topics, local journalists told CPJ. Contacted by CPJ, police would not discuss any aspect of their investigation.

APRIL 20, 2010, SAN PEDRO SULA

Jorge Alberto Orellana, Televisión de Honduras

Orellana, 50, also known as “Georgino,” was shot by an unidentified gunman as he was leaving Televisión de Honduras studios around 9 p.m., according to local news accounts. The assailant fled on foot, the local newspaper *Tiempo* reported. The journalist was taken to Hospital Mario Rivas, where he was pronounced dead.

Orellana hosted the program “En Vivo con Georgino” (Georgino Live), which focused on local news, mostly related to cultural events, José Peraza, a reporter with Radio Progreso in San Pedro Sula, told CPJ. Orellana did not report on sensitive stories such as organized crime, *Tiempo* Editor Rubén Escobar said.

Before joining Televisión de Honduras, Orellana had worked for the newspaper *La Prensa* and the country’s leading network Televisión, Honduran media reports said. After the coup that ousted President Manuel Zelaya in June 2009, Orellana left Televisión because of discomfort with the station’s editorial position in support of the interim government, local reporters said. Orellana was also a journalism professor at the National University of Honduras in San Pedro Sula.

On April 30, Honduran police arrested Jonathan Joseph Cockborn

Delgado and accused him of killing Orellana. Police alleged that Cockborn, who was also wanted on unrelated weapons and theft charges, had committed the killing in the course of a robbery.

The next month, prosecutors announced that there was insufficient evidence to file charges against Cockborn in the murder. Cockborn remained in detention in connection with other alleged offenses.

JUNE 14, 2010, EL PARAÍSO

Luis Arturo Mondragón, Channel 19

Two assailants shot Mondragón, Channel 19 owner and anchor, multiple times as he was leaving the station after the evening newscast, according to news accounts and CPJ interviews.

Local reporters and his family say Mondragón was pointed in his stories about corruption, narcotics trafficking, and unlawful lumbering. “Those are dangerous topics here,” said Osmin Garcia, correspondent for the national newspaper *El Tiempo*. “He talked about them on the newscast without giving names, but that wasn’t enough protection.”

Mondragón also had a police record, although he had not been prosecuted. He had been charged in two violent crimes—including an alleged sexual assault—and in one theft. Officials in the regional prosecutor’s office told CPJ that a judge had dismissed some charges and that Mondragón had reached private arrangements with alleged victims in other cases.

One of Mondragón’s sons, Carlos, told CPJ that his father had brought the family together to talk about recent death threats he had received. The father did not make clear the nature of the threats. “My father had the attitude that he was going to go ahead anyway. He said he had to continue. He said, ‘If they are going to kill me, they won’t threaten first, they’ll just do it.’” Contacted by CPJ, police would not discuss any aspect of their investigation.

AUGUST 24, 2010, NEAR SAN PEDRO SULA

Israel Zelaya Díaz, Radio Internacional

Zelaya, 56, a reporter for Radio Internacional, was found shot to death along a rural road near the northern city of San Pedro Sula, according to press reports. He had been shot twice in the head and once in the chest.

Zelaya was last seen earlier that day at a local gas station, where he was talking with a man in a taxi, the daily *Tiempo* reported. He had not

mentioned receiving recent threats, but his home had been damaged in a fire of undetermined origin three months earlier, according to Radio Internacional colleagues. Zelaya reported on a range of local topics, including politics and crime. Honduran authorities did not immediately disclose possible motives or suspects.

DECEMBER 28, 2010, LA MASICA

Henry Suazo, Radio HRN, Cablevisión del Atlántico

Suazo, correspondent for Tegucigalpa-based Radio HRN and news presenter for Cablevisión del Atlántico, was shot as he was leaving his home, according to news reports. Two unidentified assailants fired multiple times and then fled on bicycles.

Suazo covered a variety of topics in the towns of San Juan Pueblo and La Masica. He had been threatened in the past, the Tegucigalpa-based daily *El Herald* reported, although the nature of the threats was unclear.

India: 1

JULY 2, 2010, ANDHRA PRADESH

Hem Chandra Pandey (Hemant Pandey), freelance

Pandey, who contributed to Hindi-language newspapers, was killed in a shootout between Maoists and state police in Andhra Pradesh, southern district of Adilabad, news reports said. Also killed was Cherukuri Rajkumar, known as Azad, a leader of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), who had been arranging peace talks between Maoists and the central government.

Pandey was employed in the corporate communications department of the Delhi-Assam Roadways Corp., local news reports said. Media reports said he wrote articles under the name of Hemant Pandey in Hindi-language dailies such as *Nai Dunia*, *Dainik Jagaran*, and *Rastriya Sahara*. His last piece, on July 1, had been a commentary on food shortages.

Communist Party spokesperson Gudsa Usendi and Pandey's wife were quoted in news reports as saying the victim was meeting Azad for an interview. They alleged the two men had been set up by police, local news reports said.

Police identified Pandey as a colleague of Azad. A press release by the

Communist Party's north regional bureau said Pandey was a member, although party leaders also called him a journalist in local news reports. The Indian Journalists' Union and the Andhra Pradesh Union of Working Journalists raised "serious doubts about the circumstances" of Pandey's death and demanded an independent inquiry.

Iraq: 1

NOVEMBER 21, 2010, MOSUL

Mazen Mardan al-Baghdadi, Al-Mosuliya

Three armed men shot al-Baghdadi, 18, a presenter for Al-Mosuliya television, at the door of his home, according to news reports. The men identified themselves as military intelligence agents when they arrived at the home that evening, the journalist's father told the local press freedom group Society to Defend Press Freedom in Iraq.

"They said that they needed to see Mazen urgently," the father was quoted as saying. The men opened fire when al-Baghdadi arrived at the door, shooting him twice in the head, the father said.

Al-Baghdadi was a presenter for two news talk shows on Al-Mosuliya. He had worked at the station for seven months. Authorities disclosed no motive for the killing.

Mexico: 7

JANUARY 2010, LOS MOCHIS

José Luis Romero, Línea Directa

Masked men kidnapped Romero as he entered a restaurant in Los Mochis about 6 p.m. on December 30, 2009, bundling the reporter into a waiting SUV, according to news reports and CPJ interviews. Eliu Lorenzo Patiño, a former military officer who was accompanying Romero, was also abducted and remained missing in late year.

The detective assigned to the abductions was himself murdered about six hours after the kidnappings were reported, Mexican press reports said. The state attorney general told reporters that the two cases might be connected, according to press reports.

On January 16, 2010, Romero's body was found along a rural road near Los Mochis, said Rolando Bon López, Sinaloa's assistant state

prosecutor. The body had signs of torture; Romero had been shot and his hands had been broken, Bon López said.

Romero had covered the crime beat for the statewide radio broadcaster Línea Directa for 10 years, News Director Luis Alberto Díaz told CPJ. He said he believed Romero was the victim of one of two warring drug cartels. Díaz said murdering a well-known broadcaster fit into the cartels' intentions to intimidate the public. "They want to seed psychosis among the audience; they want to terrorize; they want to keep people's mouths shut," Díaz said.

JANUARY 29, 2010, AYUTLA DE LOS LIBRES

Jorge Ochoa Martínez, *El Sol de la Costa*

Ochoa, an editor and publisher in Guerrero state, was shot after leaving a birthday party for a local politician, local reporters told CPJ. Ochoa owned *El Sol de la Costa*, a small-circulation weekly based in Ayutla de los Libres.

María del Carmen Castro, Ochoa's widow, told local reporters that her husband had recently received cell-phone threats. In March, police arrested a suspect who had been involved in a traffic dispute with Ochoa, said Albertico Guinto Sierra, acting state attorney general of Guerrero.

MARCH 12, 2010, CHILPANCINGO

Evaristo Pacheco Solís, *Visión Informativa*

Pacheco's body was found along a rural road in the Guerrero state capital of Chilpancingo with five gunshot wounds, one to the head, according to news reports citing law enforcement officials.

Pacheco, 33, a reporter for the weekly, was the second journalist murdered in as many months in Guerrero, a southern Pacific coast state with strategic transit points and agricultural land used by drug cartels. Albertico Guinto Sierra, acting state attorney general, told CPJ that investigators had not identified a motive or suspects.

JUNE 28, 2010, COYUCA DE BENÍTEZ

María Elvira Hernández Galeana, *Nueva Línea*

Juan Francisco Rodríguez Ríos, freelance

Hernández, 36, and her husband, Rodríguez, 49, were shot dead at the Internet café they owned in the town of Coyuca de Benítez, state of Guerrero, according to international and local news reports.

Two unidentified gunmen broke into the café around 9:30 p.m. and shot the journalists at close range. Rodríguez was shot four times, and Hernández three times, the Mexico City-based daily *Milenio* reported. The couple's 18-year-old son was at the store during the attack but was uninjured, according to the news agency EFE.

Hernández, editor of the local weekly *Nueva Línea*, covered politics and social issues, colleagues said. Rodríguez was a stringer for the newspaper *El Sol de Acapulco* and a representative for the national Press Reporters Union. A few hours before the attack, Rodríguez had covered a demonstration marking the 15th anniversary of a confrontation between peasants and state police known as the Massacre of Aguas Blancas, according to Salomón Cruz Gallardo, a union representative. (Police killed 17 people involved in a protest march in Coyuca de Benítez in the 1995 case.)

A spokesman for the state prosecutor told CPJ the killings occurred during a robbery. Local journalists were skeptical, saying an Internet café in a small town was not likely to have much cash on hand.

JULY 6, 2010, NEAR APATZINGÁN

Hugo Alfredo Olivera Cartas, *El Día de Michoacán*, ADN

Olivera, 27, owner and editor of the local newspaper *El Día de Michoacán* and a small local news agency called ADN, was found dead near the city of Apatzingán, Michoacán state. Unidentified assailants shot Olivera three times with a .32-caliber gun and left the reporter's body inside his truck, a spokesman at the state prosecutor's office told CPJ.

Olivera had been last seen around 9 p.m. on July 5 as he was leaving the paper's office to cover a suicide attempt, according to a relative who spoke to CPJ on condition of anonymity. Unidentified individuals ransacked the paper's offices early the morning of July 6, the Mexican news agency *Quadratin* reported, taking computer hard drives and flash drives.

Olivera was also a correspondent for the Morelia-based newspaper *La Voz de Michoacán* and a stringer for *Quadratin*. He reported mainly on crime in Apatzingán and the surrounding area, reporters at *Quadratin* and *La Voz de Michoacán* told CPJ.

In February, Olivera filed a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission alleging he had been beaten by federal police. The journalist had not reported threats before his death, a family member and local reporters told CPJ.

Michoacán Gov. Leonel Godoy said evidence indicated that Olivera's killing had been carried out by organized crime groups, the Mexico City-based daily *La Jornada* reported. But state prosecutor Jesús Montejano Ramírez said his office considered robbery to be the strongest motive, according to *La Jornada*.

JULY 10, 2010, MONTEMORELOS

Marco Aurelio Martínez Tijerina, XEDD

Radio reporter Martínez, 45, was abducted July 9 and found shot to death the next day in the city of Montemorelos, state of Nuevo León, according to local news accounts. Gunmen in three vehicles intercepted Martínez while he was driving in Montemorelos and forced him into one of their vehicles, according to the Mexican press group Center for Journalism and Public Ethics.

Local police found his beaten body along a rural road near the northern border of Nuevo León. The journalist had been shot once in the head, according to Agence France-Presse.

Martínez covered a variety of local topics, including politics, but did not generally handle crime or other dangerous assignments, according to a colleague. Martínez, a journalist with more than a decade of experience, also worked as a correspondent for the national media outlets TV Azteca and W Radio. Local authorities did not identify any suspects or disclose a motive.

Nepal: 3

FEBRUARY 8, 2010, KATHMANDU

Jamim Shah, Channel Nepal and Space Time Network

Two masked gunmen on motorbikes fired on Shah, chairman of Channel Nepal television and the satellite Space Time Network, as he was traveling in a car near the French Embassy in Kathmandu's busy Lazimpat district. Police told local media that Shah had been shot twice in the head and once in the chest.

Shah died an hour later while being treated at a nearby hospital, news reports said. His driver, Mathura Man Malakar, suffered a thigh wound. Police told reporters that they had not determined a motive for the shooting.

Shah had business interests in several fields but was best known for

his media companies. He was considered the first to introduce private cable television to Nepal, in 2001. His satellite network controlled virtually all of the distribution of foreign TV channels in Nepal, according to news reports.

MARCH 1, 2010, JANAKPUR

Arun Singhaniya, Today Group

Gunmen shot Singhaniya, chairman of the media company Today Group, three times at point-blank range near his residence in Janakpur, about 125 miles (200 kilometers) southeast of the capital, Kathmandu, according to local and international news reports. The Today Group owns the local daily *Janakpur Today* and Radio Today.

At least three groups—all armed factions of an ethnic Madhesi separatist campaign in the southern Terai plains—made unverified claims to have carried out the attack, news reports said.

JULY 22, 2010, TULSIPUR

Devi Prasad Dhital, Radio Tulsipur FM

Unidentified assailants shot Dhital, chairman of Radio Tulsipur FM, as he was riding a motorcycle in Tulsipur, in Nepal's mid-western district of Dang, about 280 miles (450 kilometers) west of Kathmandu, according to local and international media reports. The attack came in the early evening as Dhital was driving home. Hit by three gunshots to the chest, Dhital was rushed to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Dhital was a businessman, an active member of the political party Nepali Congress, and a member of the Human Rights and Peace Society. Police said the attack had been planned, but they did not disclose a motive. Dhital had not received any prior threats, according to the chief of police, Thakur Prasad Gyawali.

Nigeria: 1

APRIL 24, 2010, OUTSIDE LAGOS

Edo Sule Ugbagwu, *The Nation*

Ugbagwu, 42, a court reporter for the private daily *The Nation*, was shot twice in the head at his house in a northern suburb of Lagos. Two men had stormed the house demanding money from Ugbagwu's

brother, Okloho, local journalists reported.

Moments before the killing, Ugbagwu was walking with his wife, Mariam, when he received repeated phone calls, local journalists told CPJ. He rushed back to the house promising his wife that he would return momentarily, according to local reports.

Ugbagwu was shot after he entered the house and shouted at the armed men to leave, reports said. He was taken to a local hospital and then moved to Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, according to local reports and relatives.

The killers left Ugbagwu's house immediately after the shooting and drove off without taking anything, local journalists told CPJ. *Nation* Deputy Editor Lawal Ogienagbon said Ugbagwu had not been working on any sensitive stories before his death.

Pakistan: 2

NOVEMBER 18, 2010, NEAR TURBAT

Lala Hameed Baloch, *Daily Intikhab*

Hameed's gunshot-riddled body was found outside Turbat, a city in western Baluchistan province, after he had disappeared on October 25 while traveling to his home in Gwader, according to the Gwader Press Club. Local journalists believed he was seized by Pakistani security officials, according to Mazhar Abbas, former secretary-general of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists.

Hameed reported for the Urdu-language *Daily Intikhab* and worked as a stringer for several other news outlets, Abbas said. He was an active supporter of the Baluch National Movement, a political organization that advocates for an autonomous Baluchistan, according to Baluch nationalist websites and local news reports.

Both his reporting and his political activities were considered possible motives for his murder, according to Owais Aslam Ali, secretary-general of the Pakistan Press Foundation.

The body of another man, Hamid Ismail, was discovered with Baloch, according to local news reports. Four other bodies were found across Baluchistan during the three-day festival of Eid, which concluded November 19, according to the Lahore-based *Daily Times* newspaper. Relatives alleged that government officials had targeted the victims for their political activism.

DECEMBER 5, 2010, MIRPURKHAS

Mehmood Chandio, Awaz

Chandio, bureau chief for the Sindhi-language television station Awaz and president of the local press club, was killed by assailants outside his house in Mirpurkhas, Sindh province, according to news reports. Gunmen shot Chandio at least twice when he answered their knock at his door, according to Mazhar Abbas, former head of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. Chandio, 45, died after being transported to a local hospital.

The motive was not immediately clear. The support group Rural Media Network Pakistan said Chandio had received threats related to family and business matters. He was also a former member of Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz, a political party seeking independence for the province. He was survived by his wife, mother, and six children, according to local media reports.

Philippines: 1

JULY 31, 2010, IRIGA CITY

Miguel Belen, DWEB

Belen, a part-time radio commentator, died in a local hospital after being shot seven times by two motorcycle-riding assailants on the evening of July 9, according to news reports. On August 5, murder charges were filed against Eric Vargas, 34, the alleged driver, and Gina Bagacina, the accused shooter, according to news reports, which said Belen had identified his attackers before he died.

Senior Police Superintendent Jonathan Ablang told local reporters that Bagacina was a member of the New Peoples' Army, a communist-inspired insurgent group that has long been active in the area. Ablang said there was a "relationship" between Bagacina and Belen but would give no specific details. The Philippine National Police said the killings might have been politically motivated but did not elaborate. Belen had worked on several local political campaigns.

Somalia: 1

AUGUST 31, 2010, GALKAYO DISTRICT, PUNTLAND

Abdullahi Omar Gedi, Radio Daljir

Gedi, 25, a studio technician and part-time reporter for Radio Daljir, was stabbed in the Galkayo district of Somalia's semi-autonomous region of Puntland, according to local journalists.

Shortly after leaving work to meet a friend that evening, Gedi was stabbed several times by multiple, unidentified assailants, the station reported. He died of chest and leg injuries at Galkayo General Hospital, local journalists told CPJ. Primarily a studio technician, Gedi also covered local news as a reporter and a presenter. Authorities did not disclose a motive or suspects.

Turkey: 1

APRIL 4, 2010, ADANA

Metin Alataş, *Azadiya Welat*

Alataş, 34, a reporter for the independent daily *Azadiya Welat*, was found hanging from a tree in an orchard in the Hadirli district of Adana in the predominantly Kurdish region of southeastern Turkey on April 4, according to local news accounts. Alataş had gone that morning to Hadirli to distribute copies of the newspaper but never returned to his home in the Seyhan district, 10 miles from where his body was found.

Hakki Boltan, editor of *Azadiya Welat*, told CPJ that a preliminary autopsy performed at the Adana Forensic Medicine Institute did not find evidence of foul play. Staff at the daily and Alataş' family, however, disputed the finding of suicide and called for a broader investigation.

Alataş had received several death threats, according to Vedat Özkan, lawyer for *Azadiya Welat*. On December 22, 2009, five unidentified men in a car approached Alataş on his way to work and assaulted him. Alataş sustained injuries to his legs and was treated at a hospital in Adana. Özkan said police did not investigate the assault.

Uganda: 1

SEPTEMBER 13, 2010, NANTABULIRIWA

Dickson Ssentongo, Prime Radio

Assailants armed with iron bars beat Ssentongo as he was on his way to work in Nantabuliriwa in Mukono district, central Uganda, around

5 a.m., local journalists and the Ugandan Human Rights Journalist Network reported. The assailants apparently dragged him into a nearby cassava field.

Ssentongo, 29, died of his injuries before he could receive treatment at Mulago Hospital. Colleagues said Ssentongo's personal belongings, including cell phone and wallet, were left intact.

Ssentongo presented a daily 7 a.m. news broadcast at Kireka-based Prime Radio, the station's news editor, Katangole Kiwanuka, told CPJ. Although Prime Radio is a Seventh-Day Adventist private station with no political leanings, Kiwanuka said, Ssentongo would occasionally discuss politics over the air. Ssentongo, a news presenter at Prime Radio for two years, was also campaigning to become a Ggoma Sub-County council member on the ticket of the opposition Democratic Party. He worked part-time for the Mukono High Court as well, local journalists told CPJ.



Journalists in Prison

Iran, China Drive Tally to Highest Level in 14 years

Iran's sustained crackdown on critical voices and China's brutal suppression of ethnic journalism pushed the number of journalists imprisoned worldwide to its highest level since 1996. In its annual census of imprisoned journalists, CPJ identified 145 reporters, editors, and photojournalists behind bars on December 1, an increase of nine from the 2009 tally.

Iran and China, with 34 imprisoned journalists apiece, were the world's worst jailers of the press, together constituting nearly half of the worldwide total. Eritrea, Burma, and Uzbekistan filled out the five worst jailers from among the 28 nations that imprison journalists.

Data from Iran were surprising in that they reflected imprisonments not simply from the post-election crackdown of 2009, but from a sustained assault on critical voices that continued throughout 2010. The Iranian detainees ranged from internationally known writers such as Issa Saharkhiz, a veteran state journalist who became a reform-minded columnist, to Navid Mohebbi, a blogger covering women's rights who, at age 18, was the youngest person on CPJ's census.

The number of imprisonments in China was up significantly from 2009, when CPJ found 24 jailed journalists. The increase was propelled by a series of imprisonments of Uighur and Tibetan journalists that began in the latter half of 2009 and continued into 2010, the details of which have emerged only recently in accounts of their court proceedings. The Uighur and Tibetan journalists covered ethnic issues and the violent regional unrest of recent years, topics that are officially off-limits. These journalists were also vulnerable because they were unrecognized by the state or Communist Party, which authorize all news media in China. The detainees included a Tibetan writer known as Buddha who questioned economic disparities between Tibet and the rest of the nation in a now-banned magazine, and Gheyrat Niyaz, editor of a Uighur website who commented on ethnic violence in the far-western Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

Both China and Iran relied heavily on the use of vague antistate charges. But CPJ found that the abusive application of antistate charges—such

Photo: Yemeni journalist Abdulelah Hider Shaea, is led into security court in Sana'a. He is one of 72 journalists held on antistate charges worldwide. (Reuters/Khaled Abdullah)

as treason, subversion, or acting against national interests—occurred worldwide and constituted the single greatest cause of journalist imprisonments. At least 72 journalists were held on such charges around the world. They included Kazakhstan newspaper editor Ramazan Yesergepov, jailed on “state secrets” charges after he embarrassed the security service by disclosing memos showing it had exerted political influence in a local tax case. Tunisian television journalist Fahem Boukadous was being held on charges of “harming public order” in his coverage of labor protests in a remote mining region. In Burundi, Jean-Claude Kavumbagu, editor of the news website *Net Press*, faced treason charges for writing an opinion piece questioning whether the country’s security forces were capable of stopping a terrorist attack. And in Vietnam, blogger Pham Thanh Nghien was jailed on antistate charges after criticizing public officials’ handling of a compensation fund for the survivors of deceased fishermen.

The increase reflected in the 2010 census came despite the release of 17 Cuban journalists who had been held on antistate charges since a 2003 government crackdown on dissent. The Roman Catholic Church, with participation from the Spanish government, struck an agreement in July with the government of President Raúl Castro Ruz that called for the release of all political prisoners still being held from the 2003 sweep. Although Cuban authorities did not explicitly condition the releases on the detainees going into exile, it is clear that is what the government wanted. All of those freed by December 1, 2010, were immediately flown to Spain. Three journalists arrested in 2003, balking at Cuba’s apparent insistence that they leave the country in exchange for their freedom, remained in jail as of December 1. A fourth Cuban journalist, arrested in 2009, also remained in prison.

Eritrea was the world’s third-worst jailer in 2010, having imprisoned 17 journalists as of December 1. Eleven of the Eritrean detainees have been held in secret locations without charge for a decade. The Eritrean government has refused to disclose any information about these detainees, who were swept up in a brutal shutdown of the independent press. Unconfirmed reports have said that four of the jailed journalists may have died due to mistreatment in custody. CPJ is seeking to corroborate those reports and continues to list the journalists in its 2010 census as a means of holding the government responsible for their fates.

With 13 journalists behind bars, Burma was the world’s fourth-worst jailer. Among those imprisoned was Hla Hla Win, a reporter for the Democratic Voice of Burma, an Oslo-based organization run by Burmese exiles and known for its hard-hitting journalism. The journalist was arrested after interviewing Buddhist monks for a story pegged to the anniversary of the 2007 Saffron Revolution, a series of monk-led protests

that was put down by lethal military force.

Uzbekistan placed fifth on CPJ's dishonor roll, with six journalists jailed on December 1. The detainees included Dzhamshid Karimov, the president's nephew, who was being held involuntarily in a psychiatric facility in reprisal for his critical coverage of the government's social and economic policies.

At least one journalist died in prison in 2010. Cameroonian editor Germain Cyrille Ngota Ngota was jailed after he and other journalists asked a presidential aide about alleged misuse of state oil company funds. An initial death certificate faulted prison officials for neglect, although the government later denied any responsibility.

For the first time since 2004, the United States did not appear on the census as a nation imprisoning journalists. For years, U.S. military forces held journalists in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantánamo Bay in open-ended detentions without charge or due process. All of those journalists were eventually released without criminal charges being corroborated, but at least 14 of them spent months or years in custody. The last of those detainees, Ibrahim Jassam, a freelance photographer who contributed to Reuters, was freed without charge in February 2010. He had spent 17 months in prison. CPJ advocated extensively over many years to sway U.S. military officials to change their detention practices.

Here are other trends and details that emerged in CPJ's analysis:

- The worldwide total reached its highest point since 1996, when CPJ recorded 185 journalists behind bars, a figure driven by Turkey's suppression of ethnic Kurdish journalists. In all, Turkey imprisoned 78 journalists that year.
- The number of imprisoned online journalists leveled off in 2010 after several consecutive years of significant increases. Sixty-nine journalists whose work appeared primarily online were jailed as of December 1, constituting nearly half of all those in jail. Print reporters, editors, and photographers made up the next largest professional category, with 57 cases in 2010. Television and radio journalists and documentary filmmakers constituted the rest.
- At least 64 freelance journalists were in prison worldwide, a figure consistent with the 2009 census. Freelance journalists can be vulnerable to imprisonment because they often do not have the legal or monetary support that news organizations can provide to staffers.
- Antistate charges were far and away the most common charge used to jail journalists. Violations of censorship rules, the second most common charge, were applied in 12 cases.

- In 11 cases, governments used a variety of charges unrelated to journalism to retaliate against critical writers, editors, and photojournalists. Such charges ranged from regulatory violations to drug possession. In the cases included in this census, CPJ determined that the charges were most likely lodged in reprisal for the journalist's work.
- Charges of criminal defamation, reporting "false" news, and engaging in ethnic or religious "insult" constituted the other charges filed against journalists in the census.
- In 34 cases, governments bypassed due process entirely, filing no charges and conducting no evident court proceedings.
- Four CPJ International Press Freedom Award winners were on the 2010 census. Awardee Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, a Cuban journalist held since the 2003 crackdown, refused to leave the island in exchange for his freedom. "He will not let anybody throw him out of his country," his wife, Laura Pollán, told CPJ.
- Azerbaijani editor Eynulla Fatullayev, another jailed CPJ awardee, remained behind bars despite rulings by the European Court of Human Rights ordering his release. CPJ research showed that authorities fabricated a series of charges against the journalist after he accused the government of a cover-up in the unsolved murder of another Azerbaijani editor, Elmar Huseynov.
- CPJ awardees Shi Tao and Mohammad Davari also appeared on the census, both held on antistate charges. Shi was serving a 10-year prison term in China for divulging propaganda department orders that were retroactively declared a state secret. Davari was being held in Iran on charges that included "disrupting national security" after he documented the abuse and rape of inmates at the Kahrizak Detention Center. His coverage sparked an outcry so strong that Iranian authorities felt compelled to shut down the facility.

CPJ believes that journalists should not be imprisoned for doing their jobs. The organization sent letters expressing its serious concerns to each country that imprisoned a journalist. CPJ advocacy led to the early release of at least 46 imprisoned journalists in 2010.

CPJ's list is a snapshot of those incarcerated at midnight on December 1, 2010. It does not include the many journalists imprisoned and released throughout the year. Journalists remain on CPJ's list until the organization determines with reasonable certainty that they have been released or have died in custody. Journalists who either disappear or are abducted by non-state entities such as criminal gangs or militant groups are not included on the prison census.

145 Journalists Imprisoned as of December 1, 2010

Afghanistan: 1

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 18, 2010

Hojatullah Mujadadi, Radio Kapisa FM,
Radio Television Afghanistan

Afghan intelligence agents arrested Mujadadi in northeastern Kapisa province as he was covering the provincial governor's visit to a voting station, news reports said. He was seized about the same time two other Afghan journalists were arrested by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on a vague accusation of Taliban links.

After an international outcry, ISAF issued a statement saying that all three were being released "without conditions," but the Afghan National Directorate of Security did not free Mujadadi, according to multiple news reports.

Mujadadi had recently taken over as Radio Kapisa's news director and had aggressively covered events throughout the province, where insurgent activity had been on the increase, according to news reports. No formal charges had been publicly disclosed by late year.

Azerbaijan: 1

IMPRISONED: APRIL 20, 2007

Eynulla Fatullayev, *Realny Azerbaijan* and *Gündalik Azarbaycan*

Authorities lodged a series of politically motivated criminal charges against Fatullayev, editor of the now-closed independent Russian-language weekly *Realny Azerbaijan* and the Azeri-language daily *Gündalik Azarbaycan*. The charges, which CPJ found to be fabricated, were filed after Fatullayev accused the government of a cover-up in

the unsolved murder of his mentor, the editor Elmar Huseynov. In November 2009, CPJ honored Fatullayev with its International Press Freedom Award.

Authorities continued to hold Fatullayev in late year despite a March ruling by the Strasbourg-based European Court of Human Rights, which ordered the journalist's immediate release. The court found Azerbaijani authorities had violated Fatullayev's rights to freedom of expression and fair trial. Azerbaijan appealed to the court's Upper Chamber, which upheld the lower court in October. As a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, Azerbaijan is bound to comply with rulings issued by the European Court.

Fatullayev was first charged in March 2007, after he published an in-depth piece that accused Azerbaijani authorities of ignoring evidence in Huseynov's murder and obstructing the investigation. Fatullayev was charged initially with defaming Azerbaijanis in an Internet comment that the journalist said had been falsely attributed to him; he was sentenced to 30 months in prison in April 2007. Six months later, Fatullayev's sentence was extended to eight and a half years on several other trumped-up charges, including terrorism, incitement to ethnic hatred, and tax evasion. The terrorism and incitement charges stemmed from a *Realny Azerbaijan* commentary that sharply criticized President Ilham Aliyev's foreign policy regarding Iran. Fatullayev denied concealing income as the tax evasion charge alleged.

Just as the European Court's deliberations on Fatullayev's case were nearing an end, Azerbaijani authorities filed a new indictment. On December 30, 2009, they charged the editor with drug possession after prison guards claimed to have found heroin in his cell. Fatullayev said guards had planted the drugs while he was taking a shower. In July, a Garadagh District Court judge sentenced Fatullayev to another two and a half years in prison, a punishment not covered by the European Court ruling.

In November, the Azerbaijani Supreme Court ruled that the country would comply with the European Court's decision, but Fatullayev remained imprisoned in late year based on the drug conviction. The drug charge was widely seen as a means by which authorities could continue to hold Fatullayev regardless of the European Court's ruling. Based on Fatullayev's account and authorities' long-standing persecution of the editor, CPJ concluded that the drug charge was without basis.

Bahrain: 2

IMPRISONED: AUGUST 13, 2010

Abduljalil Alsingace, freelance

Alsingace, a journalistic blogger and human rights activist, was arrested as part of a widespread government crackdown on political opponents, human rights defenders, and critical journalists ahead of October parliamentary elections.

The government sought to shield its actions from public scrutiny. On August 27, the public prosecutor issued a gag order barring journalists from reporting on the crackdown. Hundreds of people, mostly from the country's Shiite majority, were arrested in the crackdown. Most were released, but the government put 23 prominent defendants on trial in October on multiple antistate charges.

Security agents detained Alsingace at Bahrain International Airport as he returned from London, where he had spoken about human rights violations in the kingdom, according to his lawyer, Mohamed Ahmed. Alsingace monitored human rights for the Shiite-dominated opposition Haq Movement for Civil Liberties and Democracy. Alsingace also wrote critically of the Bahraini government in articles published on his blog, *Al-Faseela*. Authorities briefly blocked local access to his blog in 2009.

Alsingace and other detainees said through their lawyers that they had been tortured in custody. In response to local and international concerns, Foreign Minister Sheikh Khaled bin al-Khalifa said his government would investigate the allegations, the Bahrain News Agency reported. No evident investigation had begun by late year.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 5, 2010

Ali Abdel Imam, *BahrainOnline*

Abdel Imam, a leading online journalist and the founder of the *BahrainOnline* news website, was arrested as part of a broad government crackdown on political opponents, human rights defenders, and critical journalists ahead of October parliamentary elections.

The government sought to shield its actions from public scrutiny. On August 27, the public prosecutor issued a gag order barring journalists from reporting on the crackdown. Hundreds of people, mostly from the country's Shiite majority, were arrested in the crackdown. Most

were released, but the government put 23 prominent defendants on trial in October on multiple antistate charges.

BahrainOnline, which featured political news and commentary, had been blocked domestically since 2002 but was still widely read through proxy servers. The government shut its operations completely on the day Abdel Imam was arrested.

Bangladesh: 1

IMPRISONED: JUNE 1, 2010

Mahmudur Rahman, *Amar Desh*

Police raided the offices of the pro-opposition Bengali-language daily *Amar Desh* and arrested Rahman, a former opposition energy adviser and majority owner of the paper. Rahman, who was also serving as editor, was charged with unlawfully publishing the paper under an ex-employee's name, local news reports said.

Dhaka Deputy Commissioner Muhibul Haque revoked *Amar Desh's* publishing rights under the nation's restrictive registration rules, causing the paper to close for about a month before the Supreme Court overturned the order and ruled the paper could reopen, according to an *Amar Desh* editor, Zahed Chowdhury.

Rahman obtained bail on the publishing charge but continued to be held on a number of other charges, including insult and defamation, that his supporters said were intended to suppress his critical journalism. During a court appearance on June 13, Rahman said police had blindfolded and beat him in custody, according to the local *New Age* newspaper. "On remand, he was seriously tortured and mistreated," his lawyer said.

On August 10, the Supreme Court sentenced Rahman to six months in prison and fined him 100,000 taka (US\$1,436) on charges of harming the court's reputation. The charge stemmed from an April 21 *Amar Desh* article accusing the court of being biased in favor of the state, according to Agence France-Presse. Two colleagues were fined and one served a month in prison on the same charge, according to local news reports.

More than 20 defamation charges against Rahman, filed by members or allies of the ruling Awami League, including current energy adviser, Tawfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury, were pending in late year.

Burma: 13

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 2004

Ne Min (Win Shwe), freelance

Ne Min, a lawyer and a former stringer for the BBC, was sentenced to 15 years in prison on May 7, 2004, on charges that he illegally passed information to “antigovernment” organizations operating in border areas, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma, a prisoner aid group based in Thailand.

It was the second time that Burma’s military government had imprisoned the well-known journalist, also known as Win Shwe, on charges related to disseminating information to news sources outside Burma. In 1989, a military tribunal sentenced Ne Min to 14 years of hard labor for “spreading false news and rumors to the BBC to fan further disturbances in the country” and “possession of documents including antigovernment literature, which he planned to send to the BBC,” according to official radio reports. He served nine years at Rangoon’s Insein Prison before being released in 1998.

Exiled Burmese journalists who spoke with CPJ said that Ne Min had provided news to political groups and exile-run news publications before his second arrest in February 2004.

IMPRISONED: NOVEMBER 27, 2007

Win Maw, Democratic Voice of Burma

Win Maw, an undercover reporter for the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), was arrested with two friends by military intelligence agents in a Rangoon tea shop soon after visiting an Internet café. He was serving a 17-year jail sentence on charges related to his news reporting.

Authorities accused him of acting as the “mastermind” of DVB’s in-country news coverage of the 2007 Saffron Revolution, a series of Buddhist monk-led protests against the government that were put down by lethal military force, according to DVB.

Win Maw started reporting for DVB in 2003, one year after he was released from a seven-year prison sentence for composing pro-democracy songs, according to DVB. His video reports often focused on the activities of opposition groups, including the 88 Generation Students Group, according to DVB.

Win Maw was first sentenced in closed court proceedings to seven years in prison in 2008 for violations of the Immigration Act and sending “false” information to a Burmese exile-run media group. In 2009, he was sentenced to an additional 10 years for violations of the Electronic Act.

He was being held at the remote Thandwe Prison in northwestern Arakan state, nearly 600 miles from his Rangoon-based family. His family members alleged that police had tortured Win Maw during interrogations and denied him adequate medical attention.

Win Maw received the 2010 Kenji Nagai Memorial Award, an honor bestowed to Burmese journalists in memory of the Japanese photo-journalist shot and killed by Burmese troops while covering the 2007 Saffron Revolution.

IMPRISONED: JANUARY 29, 2008

Nay Phone Latt (Nay Myo Kyaw), freelance

Nay Phone Latt, also known as Nay Myo Kyaw, wrote a blog and owned three Internet cafés in Rangoon. He was arrested the morning of January 29, 2008, under the 1950 Emergency Provision Act on national security-related charges, according to news reports. His blog provided breaking news reports on the military’s crackdown on the 2007 Saffron Revolution, which were cited by several foreign news outlets, including the BBC. He also served as a youth member of the opposition National League for Democracy party, according to Reuters.

A court charged Nay Phone Latt in July 2008 with causing public offense and violating video and electronic laws when he posted caricatures of ruling generals on his blog, according to Reuters.

During closed judicial proceedings at Insein Prison on November 10, 2008, Nay Phone Latt was sentenced to 20 years and six months in prison, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom advocacy group, and news reports. The Rangoon Divisional Court later reduced the prison sentence to 12 years. Nay Phone Latt was transferred from Insein to Pa-an Prison in Karen state in late 2008, news reports said.

In 2010, he was honored with the prestigious PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award for his creative and courageous blog postings.

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 15, 2008

Sein Win Maung, *Myanmar Nation*

A police raid on the offices of the weekly *Myanmar Nation* led to the arrest of editor Thet Zin and manager Sein Win Maung, according to local and international news reports. Police also seized the journalists' cell phones, footage of monk-led antigovernment demonstrations that took place in Burma in September 2007, and a report by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, U.N. special rapporteur for human rights in Burma, according to Aung Din, director of the Washington-based U.S. Campaign for Burma. The rapporteur's report detailed killings associated with the military government's crackdown on the 2007 demonstrators.

The New Delhi-based Mizzima news agency cited family members as saying that the two were first detained in the Thingangyun Township police station before being charged with illegal printing and publishing on February 25. On November 28, 2008, a closed court at the Insein Prison compound sentenced each to seven years in prison under the Printers and Publishers Registration Law, which requires that all publications be checked by a state censor before publication.

Police ordered *Myanmar Nation's* staff to stop publishing temporarily, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom advocacy group with representatives in Bangkok. The exile-run news website *Irrawaddy* said the newspaper was allowed to resume publishing in March 2008; by October of that year, exile-run groups said, the journal had shut down for lack of leadership.

Thet Zin was among 7,000 prisoners released as part of a government amnesty on September 17, 2009, according to international news reports. Sein Win Maung remained behind bars in Kengtung Prison in Shan state, approximately 400 miles from his family in Rangoon.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 4, 2008

Maung Thura (Zarganar), freelance

Police arrested Maung Thura, a well-known blogger and comedian who used the professional name Zarganar, or "Tweezers," at his home in Rangoon, according to news reports. The police also seized electronic equipment at the time of the arrest, according to Agence France-Presse.

Maung Thura had mobilized hundreds of entertainers to help survivors of Cyclone Nargis, which devastated Rangoon and much of the Irrawaddy Delta in May 2008. His footage of relief work in hard-hit areas was circulated on DVD and the Internet. Photographs and DVD

footage of the disaster's aftermath were among the items police confiscated at the time of his arrest, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma and the U.S. Campaign for Burma.

In the week he was detained, Maung Thura gave several interviews to overseas-based news outlets, including the BBC, criticizing the military junta's response to the disaster. The day after his arrest, state-controlled media published warnings against sending video footage of relief work to foreign news agencies.

During closed proceedings in August 2008 at Insein Prison in Rangoon, the comedian was indicted on at least seven charges, according to international news reports.

On November 21, 2008, the court sentenced Maung Thura to 45 years in prison on three separate counts of violating the Electronics Act. Six days later, the court added 14 years to his term after convicting him on charges of communicating with exiled dissidents and causing public alarm in interviews with foreign media, his defense lawyer, Khin Htay Kywe, told The Associated Press. The Rangoon Divisional Court later reduced the sentences to a total of 35 years.

The Electronics Act allows for harsh prison sentences for using electronic media, including the Internet, to send information outside the country without government approval.

Maung Thura had been detained on several occasions in the past, including a September 2007 episode in which he was accused of helping Buddhist monks during the Saffron Revolution protests, according to the exile-run press freedom group Burma Media Association. He had maintained a blog, *Zarganar-window*, detailing his work.

The Oslo-based Democratic Voice of Burma reported that Maung Thura was transferred in December 2008 to remote Myintkyinar Prison in Kachin state, where he was reported to be in poor health. His sister-in-law, Ma Nyein, told the exile news website *Irrawaddy* that the journalist suffered from hypertension and jaundice.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 13, 2008

Zaw Thet Htwe, freelance

Police arrested Rangoon-based freelance journalist Zaw Thet Htwe on June 13, 2008, in the town of Minbu, where he was visiting his mother, Agence France-Presse reported. The sportswriter had been working with comedian-blogger Maung Thura in delivering aid to victims of Cyclone Nargis and videotaping the relief effort.

The journalist, who formerly edited the popular sports newspaper *First Eleven*, was indicted in a closed tribunal on August 7, 2008, and was tried along with Maung Thura and two activists, AFP reported. The group faced multiple charges, including violating the Video Act and Electronic Act and disrupting public order and unlawful association, news reports said.

The Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma said police confiscated a computer and cell phone during a raid on Zaw Thet Htwe's Rangoon home.

In November 2008, Zaw Thet Htwe was sentenced to a total of 19 years in prison on charges of violating the Electronics Act, according to the Mizzima news agency. The Rangoon Divisional Court later reduced the term to 11 years, Mizzima reported. He was serving his sentence in Taunggyi Prison in Shan state.

The Electronics Act allows for harsh prison sentences for using electronic media to send information outside the country without government approval.

Zaw Thet Htwe had been arrested before, in 2003, and given the death sentence for plotting to overthrow the government, news reports said. The sentence was later commuted. AFP reported that the 2003 arrest was related to a story about a misappropriated sports grant.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 15, 2008

Aung Kyaw San, *Myanmar Tribune*

Aung Kyaw San, editor-in-chief of the *Myanmar Tribune*, was arrested in Rangoon along with 15 others returning from relief activities in the Irrawaddy Delta region, which was devastated by Cyclone Nargis, according to the Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma and the Mizzima news agency.

Photographs that Aung Kyaw San had taken of cyclone victims appeared on some websites, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom group run by exiled journalists. Authorities closed the Burmese-language weekly after his arrest and did not allow his family visitation rights, according to the assistance association. On April 10, 2009, an Insein Prison court sentenced him to two years' imprisonment for unlawful association, Mizzima reported.

Aung Kyaw San was formerly jailed in 1990 and held for more than three years for activities with the country's pro-democracy movement, the association said. He was serving his sentence at Taunggyi Prison in Shan state, according to the association.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 26, 2009

Ngwe Soe Lin (Tun Kyaw), Democratic Voice of Burma

Ngwe Soe Lin, an undercover video journalist with the Oslo-based media organization Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), was arrested after leaving an Internet café in the old capital city of Rangoon, according to DVB. Before his conviction, DVB had publicly referred to him only as “T”

He was one of two cameramen who took video footage of children orphaned by the 2008 Cyclone Nargis disaster for a documentary titled “Orphans of the Burmese Cyclone.” The film was recognized with a Rory Peck Award for best documentary in November 2009. DVB said that another video journalist, identified only as “Zoro,” went into hiding after Ngwe Soe Lin’s arrest.

On January 27, a special military court attached to Rangoon’s Insein Prison sentenced Ngwe Soe Lin, also known as Tun Kyaw, to 13 years in prison on charges related to the vague and draconian Electronics and Immigration acts, according to a DVB statement.

The Electronics Act allows for harsh prison sentences for using electronic media to send information outside the country without government approval.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 11, 2009

Hla Hla Win, Democratic Voice of Burma**Myint Naing, freelance**

Hla Hla Win, an undercover reporter with the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), was arrested on her way back from a reporting assignment in Pakokku Township, Magwe Division, where she had conducted interviews with Buddhist monks in a local monastery. Her assistant, Myint Naing, was also arrested, according to the independent Asian Human Rights Commission.

Hla Hla Win was working on a story pegged to the second anniversary of the 2007 Saffron Revolution, Buddhist monk-led protests against the government that were put down by lethal military force, according to her DVB editors.

In October 2009, a Pakokku Township court sentenced Hla Hla Win and Myint Naing to seven years in prison for using an illegally imported motorcycle.

After interrogations in prison, Hla Hla Win was charged with violating the Electronics Act and sentenced to an additional 20 years on

December 30, 2009. Myint Naing was sentenced to an additional 25 years under the act, the Asian Human Rights Commission said. The Electronics Act allows for harsh prison sentences for using electronic media to send information outside the country without government approval.

Hla Hla Win first joined DVB as an undercover reporter in December 2008. According to her editors, she played an active role in covering issues considered sensitive to the government, including local reaction to the controversial trial in 2009 of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

In 2010, Hla Hla Win received the Kenji Nagai Memorial Award, an honor bestowed to Burmese journalists in memory of the Japanese photojournalist shot and killed by Burmese troops while covering the 2007 Saffron Revolution.

While DVB has publicly confirmed the imprisonments of several reporters, Deputy Director Khin Maung Win told CPJ that other DVB undercover reporters were behind bars as well. DVB declined to identify them due to fears that authorities would treat them more harshly if they were found to be journalists.

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 14, 2009

Nyi Nyi Tun, *Kandarawaddy*

A court attached to Rangoon's Insein Prison sentenced Nyi Nyi Tun, editor of the news journal *Kandarawaddy*, to 13 years in prison on October 13, 2010, a year after his initial detention.

The court found Nyi Nyi Tun guilty of several antistate crimes, including violations of the Unlawful Association, Immigration, Emergency, and Wireless acts, according to Mizzima, a Burmese exile-run news agency.

Nyi Nyi Tun was first detained on terrorism charges on October 14, 2009, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners in Burma, a Thailand-based advocacy organization. Authorities originally tried to connect him to a series of bomb blasts in Rangoon but apparently dropped the allegations.

Nyi Nyi Tun told his family members that he had been tortured during his interrogation, Mizzima reported. After his arrest in 2009, Burmese authorities shut down *Kandarawaddy*, a local-language journal that operated out of the Kayah special region near the country's eastern border, according to the Burma Media Association, a press freedom advocacy group.

IMPRISONED: APRIL 15, 2010

Sithu Zeya, Democratic Voice of Burma

Sithu Zeya, a video journalist with the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), was arrested while covering a grenade attack that left nine dead and hundreds injured during the annual Buddhist New Year water festival in Rangoon.

DVB editors said Sithu Zeya, 21, was near the crowded area where the blast occurred and started filming the aftermath as government authorities arrived on the scene. He was arrested immediately by police officials, who also seized his laptop computer and other personal belongings, DVB reported.

A police official, Khin Yi, said at a May 6 press conference that Sithu Zeya had been arrested for taking video footage of the attack. His mother, Yee Yee Tint, told DVB after a prison visit in May that he had been denied food and beaten during police interrogations that left a constant ringing in his ear.

DVB Deputy Editor Khin Maung Win told CPJ that Sithu Zeya had been forced to reveal under torture that his father, Maung Maung Zeya, also served as an undercover DVB reporter. They were both detained at Rangoon's Insein Prison.

As of December 1, Sithu Zeya awaited a court verdict on charges related to the Unlawful Association, Immigration, and Electronic acts.

IMPRISONED: APRIL 17, 2010

Maung Maung Zeya, Democratic Voice of Burma

Maung Maung Zeya, an undercover reporter with the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB), was arrested at his Rangoon house two days after his son and fellow DVB journalist, Sithu Zeya, was arrested for filming the aftermath of a fatal bomb attack during a Buddhist New Year celebration, according to DVB.

Maung Maung Zeya was first detained and interrogated at the Bahan Township police station in Rangoon and transferred June 14 to Rangoon's Insein Prison. DVB editors said he was a "senior member" of their undercover team inside Burma and was responsible for operation management, including making reporting assignments to other DVB journalists.

Hearings in his trial on charges related to the Unlawful Association, Immigration, and Electronic acts began on June 22 at Western Rangoon's Provincial Court. DVB Deputy Editor Khin Maung Win

told CPJ that authorities had offered to free Maung Maung Zeya if he divulged the names of other undercover DVB reporters. Charges were pending as of December 1.

Burundi: 1

IMPRISONED: JULY 17, 2010

Jean-Claude Kavumbagu, *Net Press*

Police arrested Kavumbagu, editor of the online news outlet *Net Press*, on treason charges stemming from commentary critical of the country's security forces. The July 12 piece came a day after deadly twin bomb attacks in neighboring Uganda.

The hard-line Somali insurgency Al-Shabaab, which claimed responsibility for the Ugandan bombings, threatened more attacks if Uganda and Burundi did not withdraw military forces deployed in Somalia in support of the federal government there, according to news reports. Kavumbagu's opinion piece questioned the ability of the Burundian security forces to prevent bomb attacks similar to those that struck Uganda.

Defense lawyer Gabriel Sinarinzi told CPJ that Kavumbagu was being held in pretrial detention at Mpimba Prison in Bugumbura. The charge could bring life imprisonment.

Kavumbagu had been imprisoned in 2008 on defamation charges related to an article critical of the amount of money spent on a presidential trip to the Beijing Olympics. That charge was eventually dismissed, Sinarinzi said.

China: 34

IMPRISONED: JUNE 24, 2000

Xu Zerong (David Tsui), freelance

Xu was serving a prison term on charges of "leaking state secrets" through his academic work on military history and "economic crimes" related to unauthorized publishing of foreign policy issues. Some observers believed that his jailing might have been related to an article he wrote for the Hong Kong-based *Yazhou Zhoukan* (Asia Weekly)

magazine revealing clandestine Chinese Communist Party support for a Malaysian insurgency in the 1950s and 1960s.

Xu, a permanent resident of Hong Kong, was arrested in Guangzhou and held incommunicado for 18 months until trial. In December 2001, the Shenzhen Intermediate Court sentenced him to 13 years in prison; Xu's appeal to Guangzhou Higher People's Court was rejected in 2002.

According to court documents, the "state secrets" charges against Xu stemmed from his use of historical documents for academic research. Xu, also known as David Tsui, was an associate research professor at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. In 1992, he photocopied four books published in the 1950s about China's role in the Korean War, which he then sent to a colleague in South Korea.

The verdict stated that the Security Committee of the People's Liberation Army of Guangzhou determined that the books had not been declassified 40 years after being labeled "top secret." After his arrest, St. Antony's College at Oxford University, where Xu earned his doctorate and wrote his dissertation on the Korean War, was active in researching the case and calling for his release.

Xu was also the co-founder of a Hong Kong-based academic journal, *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Jikan* (China Social Sciences Quarterly). The "economic crimes" charges were related to the "illegal publication" of more than 60,000 copies of 25 books and periodicals, including several books about Chinese politics and Beijing's relations with Taiwan.

He was arrested just days before an article appeared in the June 26, 2000, issue of *Yazhou Zhoukan*, in which he accused the Communist Party of hypocrisy when it condemned countries that criticized China's human rights record.

Xu began his sentence in Dongguan Prison, outside Guangzhou, but he was later transferred to Guangzhou Prison, where it was easier for his family to visit him. He was spared from hard labor and was allowed to read, research, and teach English in prison, according to the U.S.-based prisoner advocacy group Dui Hua Foundation. He suffered from high blood pressure and diabetes.

Dui Hua said Xu's family members had been informed of sentence reductions that would move his scheduled release date to 2011. In 2009, the Independent Chinese PEN Center honored him with a Writers in Prison Award.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 13, 2001

Jin Haike, freelance

Xu Wei, freelance

Jin and Xu were among four members of an informal discussion group called Xin Qingnian Xuehui (New Youth Study Group) who were detained and accused of “subverting state authority.” Prosecutors cited online articles and essays on political and social reform as proof of their intent to overthrow the Communist Party leadership.

The two men, along with their colleagues, Yang Zili and Zhang Honghai, were charged with subversion on April 20, 2001. More than two years later, on May 29, 2003, the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Jin and Xu each to 10 years in prison, while Yang and Zhang each received sentences of eight years. All of the sentences were to be followed by two years’ deprivation of political rights.

The four young men were students and recent university graduates who gathered occasionally to discuss politics and reform with four others, one of whom was an informant for the Ministry of State Security.

The most prominent in the group, Yang, posted his own thoughts, as well as reports by the others, on topics such as rural poverty and village elections, along with essays advocating democratic reform, on the popular website *Yangzi de Sixiang Jiayuan* (Yangzi’s Garden of Ideas). Xu was a reporter at *Xiaofei Ribao* (Consumer’s Daily). Public security agents pressured the newspaper to fire him before his arrest, a friend, Wang Ying, reported online.

The court cited a handful of articles, including Jin’s “Be a New Citizen, Reform China” and Yang’s “Choose Liberalism,” in the 2003 verdict against them. The Beijing High People’s Court rejected their appeal without hearing defense witnesses. Three of the witnesses who testified against the four men were fellow members of the group who later tried to retract their testimony.

Yang and Zhang were released on the expiration of their sentences on March 13, 2009, according to international news reports. Xu and Jin remained imprisoned at Beijing’s No. 2 Prison.

Jin’s father told CPJ in October that his son’s health had improved. He had suffered from abdominal pain, for which he had undergone surgery in 2007. Xu was suffering from psychological stress while in prison, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center.

IMPRISONED: JULY 26, 2002

Abdulghani Memetemin, freelance

Memetemin, a writer, teacher, and translator who had actively advocated for the Uighur ethnic group in the northwestern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, was detained in Kashgar, Xinjiang province, on charges of “leaking state secrets.”

In June 2003, the Kashgar Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Memetemin to nine years in prison, plus a three-year suspension of political rights. Radio Free Asia provided CPJ with court documents listing 18 specific counts against him, which included translating state news articles into Chinese from Uighur; forwarding official speeches to the Germany-based East Turkistan Information Center (ETIC)—a news outlet that advocated for an independent state for the Uighur ethnic group—and conducting original reporting for ETIC. The court also accused him of recruiting reporters for ETIC, which was banned in China. Memetemin did not have legal representation at trial.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 13, 2003

Huang Jinqu (Qing Shuijun, Huang Jin), freelance

Huang, a columnist for the U.S.-based website *Boxun News*, was arrested in Jiangsu province, and his family was not notified of his arrest for more than three months. On September 27, 2004, the Changzhou Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him to 12 years in prison on charges of “subversion of state authority,” plus four years’ deprivation of political rights.

Huang worked as a writer and editor in his native Shandong province, as well as in Guangdong province, before leaving China in 2000 to study journalism at the Central Academy of Art in Malaysia. While he was overseas, he began writing political commentary for *Boxun News* under the penname Qing Shuijun. He also wrote articles on arts and entertainment under the name Huang Jin. Huang’s writings reportedly caught the attention of the government in 2001. He told a friend that authorities had contacted his family to warn them about his writings, according to *Boxun News*.

In January 2003, Huang wrote in his online column that he intended to form a new opposition party, the China Patriot Democracy Party. When he returned to China in August 2003, he eluded public security agents just long enough to visit his family in Shandong province. In the last article he posted on *Boxun News*, titled “Me and My Public Security Friends,” he described being harassed by security agents.

Huang's appeal was rejected in December 2004. He was given a 22-month sentence reduction in July 2007, according to the U.S.-based prisoner advocacy group Dui Hua Foundation. The journalist, who suffered from arthritis, was serving his sentence in Pukou Prison in Jiangsu province.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 13, 2003

Kong Youping, freelance

Kong, an essayist and poet, was arrested in Anshan, Liaoning province. A former trade union official, he had written articles online that supported democratic reforms, appealed for the release of then-imprisoned Internet writer Liu Di, and called for a reversal of the government's "counterrevolutionary" ruling on the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1989.

Kong's essays included an appeal to democracy activists in China that stated, "In order to work well for democracy, we need a well-organized, strong, powerful, and effective organization. Otherwise, a mainland democracy movement will accomplish nothing." Several of his articles and poems were posted on the *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum) website.

In 1998, Kong served time in prison after he became a member of the Liaoning province branch of the China Democracy Party (CDP), an opposition party. In 2004, he was tried on subversion charges along with co-defendant Ning Xianhua, who was accused of being vice chairman of the CDP branch in Liaoning, according to the U.S.-based advocacy organization Human Rights in China and court documents obtained by the U.S.-based Dui Hua Foundation. On September 16, 2004, the Shenyang Intermediate People's Court sentenced Kong to 15 years in prison, plus four years' deprivation of political rights. Ning received a 12-year sentence.

Kong suffered from hypertension and was imprisoned in the city of Lingyuan, far from his family. He received a sentence reduction to 10 years after an appeal, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center. The group reported that his eyesight was deteriorating.

IMPRISONED: NOVEMBER 24, 2004

Shi Tao, freelance

Shi, the former editorial director of the Changsha-based newspaper *Dangdai Shang Bao* (Contemporary Trade News), was detained near his home in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, in November 2004.

He was formally charged with “providing state secrets to foreigners” by sending an e-mail on his Yahoo account to the U.S.-based editor of the website *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum). In an anonymous e-mail sent several months before his arrest, Shi transcribed his notes from local propaganda department instructions to his newspaper, which included directives on coverage of the Falun Gong and the upcoming 15th anniversary of the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square.

The National Administration for the Protection of State Secrets retroactively certified the contents of the e-mail as classified, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

On April 27, 2005, the Changsha Intermediate People’s Court found Shi guilty and sentenced him to a 10-year prison term. In June of that year, the Hunan Province High People’s Court rejected his appeal without granting a hearing.

Court documents in the case revealed that Yahoo supplied information to Chinese authorities that helped them identify Shi as the sender of the e-mail. Yahoo’s participation in the identification of Shi and other jailed dissidents raised questions about the role that international Internet companies play in the repression of online speech in China and elsewhere.

In November 2005, CPJ honored Shi with its annual International Press Freedom Award for his courage in defending the ideals of free expression. In November 2007, members of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs rebuked Yahoo executives for their role in the case and for wrongly testifying in earlier hearings that the company did not know the Chinese government’s intentions when it sought Shi’s account information.

Yahoo, Google, and Microsoft later joined with human rights organizations, academics, and investors to form the Global Network Initiative, which adopted a set of principles to protect online privacy and free expression in October 2008.

Human Rights Watch awarded Shi a Hellman/Hammett grant for persecuted writers in October 2009.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 3, 2004

Zheng Yichun, freelance

Zheng, a former professor, was a regular contributor to overseas news websites, including the U.S.-based *Epoch Times*, which is affiliated with the banned religious movement Falun Gong. He wrote a series of

editorials that directly criticized the Communist Party and its control of the media.

Because of police warnings, Zheng's family remained silent about his detention in Yingkou, Liaoning province, until state media reported that he had been arrested on suspicion of inciting subversion. Zheng was initially tried by the Yingkou Intermediate People's Court on April 26, 2005. No verdict was announced and, on July 21, he was tried again on the same charges. As in the April 26 trial, proceedings lasted just three hours. Though officially "open" to the public, the courtroom was closed to all observers except close family members and government officials. Zheng's supporters and a journalist were prevented from entering, according to a local source.

Prosecutors cited dozens of articles written by the journalist, and listed the titles of several essays in which he called for political reform, increased capitalism in China, and an end to the practice of imprisoning writers. On September 20, the court sentenced Zheng to seven years in prison, to be followed by three years' deprivation of political rights.

Sources familiar with the case believe that Zheng's harsh sentence may be linked to Chinese leaders' objections to the *Epoch Times* series "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party," which called the Chinese Communist Party an "evil cult" with a "history of killings" and predicted its demise.

Zheng is diabetic, and his health declined after his imprisonment. After his first appeal was rejected, he intended to pursue an appeal in a higher court, but his defense lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, was himself imprisoned in August 2006. Zheng's family was unable to find another lawyer willing to take the case.

In summer 2008, prison authorities at Jinzhou Prison in Liaoning informed Zheng's family that he had suffered a brain hemorrhage and received urgent treatment in prison. However, no lawyer would agree to represent Zheng in an appeal for medical parole, according to Zheng Xiaochun, the journalist's brother, who spoke with CPJ by telephone.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 23, 2005

Yang Tongyan (Yang Tianshui), freelance

Yang, commonly known by his penname Yang Tianshui, was detained along with a friend in Nanjing, eastern China. He was tried on charges of "subverting state authority," and on May 17, 2006, the Zhenjiang

Intermediate People's Court sentenced him to 12 years in prison.

Yang was a well-known writer and member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center. He was a frequent contributor to U.S.-based websites banned in China, including *Boxun News* and *Epoch Times*. He often wrote critically about the ruling Communist Party, and he advocated for the release of jailed Internet writers.

According to the verdict in Yang's case, which was translated into English by the U.S.-based Dui Hua Foundation, the harsh sentence against him was related to a fictitious online election, established by overseas Chinese citizens, for a "democratic Chinese transitional government." His colleagues say that without his prior knowledge, he was elected to the leadership of the fictional government. He later wrote an article in *Epoch Times* in support of the model.

Prosecutors also accused Yang of transferring money from overseas to Wang Wenjiang, who had been convicted of endangering state security. Yang's defense lawyer argued that this money was humanitarian assistance to the family of a jailed dissident and should not have constituted a criminal act.

Believing that the proceedings were fundamentally unjust, Yang did not appeal. He had already spent 10 years in prison for his opposition to the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square in 1989.

In June 2008, Shandong provincial authorities refused to renew the law license of Yang's lawyer, press freedom advocate Li Jianqiang, who also represented imprisoned journalist Zhang Jianhong. In 2008, the PEN American Center announced that Yang was a recipient of the PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 6, 2006

Zhang Jianhong, freelance

The founder and editor of the popular news and literary website *Aiqinhai* (Aegean Sea) was taken from his home in Ningbo, in eastern China's Zhejiang province. In October 2006, Zhang was formally arrested on charges of "inciting subversion." He was sentenced to six years in prison by the Ningbo Intermediate People's Court in March 2007, followed by one year's deprivation of political rights.

Authorities did not clarify their allegations against Zhang, but supporters believed they were linked to online articles critical of government actions. An editorial he wrote two days before his detention

called attention to international organizations' criticism of the government's human rights record and, in particular, to the poor treatment of journalists and their sources two years before the start of the Olympics. Zhang referred to the situation as "Olympicgate."

Zhang was an author, screenwriter, and reporter who served a year and a half of "re-education through labor" in 1989-90 on counter-revolutionary charges for his writing in support of protesters. He was dismissed from a position in the local writers association and began working as a freelance writer.

His website, *Aiqinhai*, was closed in March 2006 for unauthorized posting of international and domestic news. He had also been a contributor to several U.S.-based Chinese-language websites, including *Boxun News*, the pro-democracy forum *Minzhu Luntan*, and *Epoch Times*.

In September 2007, Shandong provincial authorities refused to renew the law license of Zhang's lawyer, press freedom advocate Li Jianqiang, who represented other imprisoned journalists as well.

Zhang's health deteriorated significantly in jail, according to his wife, Dong Min, who spoke with CPJ by telephone in October 2008. He suffered from a debilitating disease affecting the nervous system and was unable to perform basic tasks without help. Appeals for parole on medical grounds were not granted and, by 2009, he was no longer able to write, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center. His scheduled release date is September 2012.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 14, 2006

Yang Maodong (Guo Feixiong), freelance

Yang, commonly known by his penname Guo Feixiong, was a prolific writer, activist, and legal analyst for the Beijing-based Shengzhe law firm. Police detained him in September 2006 after he reported and gave advice on a number of sensitive political cases facing the local government in his home province of Guangdong.

Yang was detained for three months in 2005 for "sending news overseas" and disturbing public order after he reported on attempts by villagers in Taishi, Guangdong, to oust a village chief. He was eventually released without prosecution, but remained vocal on behalf of rights defenders, giving repeated interviews to foreign journalists. A police beating he sustained in February 2006 prompted a well-known human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, to stage a high-profile hunger strike. Police in Beijing detained Yang for two days that February after

he protested several government actions, including the closing of the popular *Yunnan* bulletin board, where he had posted information about the Taishi village case.

Yang's September 2006 arrest was for "illegal business activity," international news reports said. After a 15-month pretrial detention, a court convicted him of illegally publishing a magazine in 2001, according to U.S.-based advocacy groups. One of a series of magazines he had published since the 1990s, *Political Earthquake in Shenyang*, exposed one of the largest official graft cases in China's history in Shenyang, Liaoning province, according to the Dui Hua Foundation. CPJ's 2001 International Press Freedom Awardee, Jiang Weiping, spent five years in prison for reporting on the same case for a magazine in Hong Kong.

Although police had interrogated his assistant and confiscated funds in 2001 concerning the unauthorized publication charge, the case attracted no further punitive measures until Yang became involved in activism.

Yang's defense team from the Mo Shaoping law firm in Beijing argued that a five-year limit for prosecuting illegal publishing had expired by the time of his trial, according to the Dui Hua Foundation, which published the defense statement in 2008. But Yang was still sentenced to five years in prison.

Yang has gone on hunger strike several times to protest ill treatment by authorities in Meizhou Prison in Guangdong. He was brutally force-fed on at least one of these occasions and remained in poor health, according to the advocacy group Human Rights in China (HRIC). The group said his treatment in the detention center before his trial was so aggressive that he attempted suicide. Police subjected him to around-the-clock interrogations for 13 days, HRIC said, and administered electric shocks. The group also said that Yang's family had been persecuted since his imprisonment: His wife was laid off and his two children were held back in school in retribution for his work.

IMPRISONED: MAY 30, 2007

Sun Lin, freelance

Nanjing-based reporter Sun was arrested along with his wife, He Fang, on May 30, 2007, according to the U.S.-based website *Boxun News*. Sun had previously documented harassment by authorities in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, as a result of his audio, video, and print reports for the banned Chinese-language news site. *Boxun News* said authorities

confiscated a computer and video equipment from the couple at the time of their arrest.

In the arrest warrant, Sun was accused of possessing an illegal weapon, and a police statement issued on June 1, 2007, said he was the leader of a criminal gang. Lawyers met with Sun and He that June, but the couple was later denied visits from legal counsel and family members, according to a *Boxun News* report. A trial was postponed twice for lack of evidence.

A four-year prison sentence for possessing illegal weapons and assembling a disorderly crowd was delivered on June 30, 2008, in a hearing closed to Sun's lawyers and family, according to The Associated Press.

Witness testimony about Sun's possession of weapons was contradictory, according to news reports. The disorderly crowd charge was based on an incident in 2004, three years before his arrest. Police accused him of disturbing the peace while aiding people evicted from their homes, but the journalist said he had broken no laws.

Sun's wife, He, was given a suspended sentence of 15 months in prison on similar charges, according to Sun's defense lawyer, Mo Shaoping. She was allowed to return home after the hearing. The couple has a 12-year-old daughter.

Prison authorities transferred Sun to Jiangsu province's Pukou Prison in September 2008, according to a report published by *Boxun News*. The report said Nanjing authorities refused to return the confiscated equipment. Because seeking a sentence reduction would involve admitting guilt, Sun has resolved to serve the time in full, according to the report.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 25, 2007

Qi Chonghuai, freelance

Qi and a colleague, Ma Shiping, criticized a local official in Shandong province in an article published June 8, 2007, on the website of the U.S.-based *Epoch Times*, according to Qi's lawyer, Li Xiongbing. On June 14, the two posted photographs on Xinhua news agency's anti-corruption Web forum showing a luxurious government building in the city of Tengzhou.

Police in Tengzhou detained Ma on June 16 on charges of carrying a false press card. Qi, a journalist of 13 years, was arrested in his home in Jinan, the provincial capital, more than a week later, and charged with fraud and extortion, Li said. Qi was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison on May 13, 2008.

Qi was accused of taking money from local officials while reporting several stories, a charge he denied. The people from whom he was accused of extorting money were local officials threatened by his reporting, Li said. Qi told his lawyer and his wife, Jiao Xia, that police beat him during questioning on August 13, 2007, and again during a break in his trial. Qi was being held in Tengzhou Prison, a four-hour trip from his family's home, which limited visits.

Ma, a freelance photographer, was sentenced in late 2007 to one and a half years in prison. He was released in 2009, according to Jiao Xia.

IMPRISONED: AUGUST 24, 2007

Lü Gengsong, freelance

The Public Security Bureau in Hangzhou, capital of eastern Zhejiang province, charged Lü with “inciting subversion of state power,” according to human rights groups and news reports. Officials also searched his home and confiscated his computer hard drive and files soon after his detention in August 2007. Police did not notify his wife, Wang Xue’e, of the arrest for more than a month.

The detention was connected to Lü’s articles on corruption, land expropriation, organized crime, and human rights abuses, which were published on overseas websites. Police told his wife that his writings had “attacked the Communist Party,” she told CPJ. The day before his arrest, he reported on the trial and two-year sentence of housing rights activist Yang Yunbiao. Lü, a member of the banned China Democracy Party, was also author of a 2000 book, *Corruption in the Communist Party of China*, which was published in Hong Kong.

The Intermediate People’s Court in Hangzhou convicted Lü of subversion after a closed-door, one-day trial on January 22, 2008. The court handed down a four-year jail term the next month. The journalist’s wife, Wang Xue’e, told CPJ in October 2010 that she was able to visit Lü at Xijiao Prison in Hangzhou about once a month.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 27, 2007

Hu Jia, freelance

Police charged Hu, a prominent human rights activist and essayist, with “incitement to subvert state power” based on six online commentaries and two interviews with foreign media in which he criticized the Communist Party. On April 3, 2008, he was sentenced to three and a half years in prison.

Hu had advocated for AIDS patients, defended the rights of farmers,

and promoted environmental protection. His writings, which appeared on his blog, criticized the Communist Party's human rights record, called for democratic reform, and condemned government corruption. They included an open letter to the international community about China's failure to fulfill pledges to improve human rights before the 2008 Olympics. He frequently provided information to other activists and foreign media to highlight human rights abuses in China.

Hu's wife, human rights activist Zeng Jinyan, applied in April 2008 for medical parole for her husband, who suffered from chronic liver disease, but the request was turned down, according to updates posted on her blog, *Liao Liao Yuan*. The day of the Olympic opening ceremony in August 2008, Zeng was taken to the city of Dalian, Liaoning province, and only allowed to return to her Beijing home after 16 days. She reported this on her blog with no further explanation.

The European Parliament awarded Hu a prestigious human rights accolade, the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, in October 2008. The Chinese ambassador to the European Union warned that the prize would "bring serious damage to China-EU relations," according to The Associated Press.

In October 2008, Hu was transferred to the Beijing Municipal Prison, according to Zeng's blog. He raised human rights issues in jail, prompting security officials to cut off family visitation rights from November 2008 to February 2009, according to online news reports. Zeng reported that Hu's health was deteriorating and that the prison did not have facilities to treat his liver condition.

Human Rights Watch awarded Hu a Hellman/Hammett grant for persecuted writers in October 2009.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 26, 2008

Dhondup Wangchen, Filming for Tibet

Police in Tongde, Qinghai province, arrested Wangchen, a Tibetan documentary filmmaker, shortly after he sent footage filmed in Tibet to colleagues, according to the production company, Filming for Tibet. A 25-minute film titled "Jigdrel" (Leaving Fear Behind) was produced from the tapes. Wangchen's assistant, Jigme Gyatso, was also arrested, once in March 2008, and again in March 2009, after speaking out about his treatment in prison, Filming for Tibet said.

Filming for Tibet was founded in Switzerland by Gyaljong Tsetrin, a relative of Wangchen, who left Tibet in 2002 but maintained contact with people there. Tsetrin told CPJ that he had spoken to Wangchen

on March 25, 2008, but that he had lost contact after that. He learned of the detention only later, after speaking by telephone with relatives.

Filming for the documentary was completed shortly before peaceful protests against Chinese rule of Tibet deteriorated into riots in Lhasa and in Tibetan areas of China in March 2008. The filmmakers had gone to Tibet to ask ordinary people about their lives under Chinese rule in the run-up to the Olympics.

The arrests were first publicized when the documentary was first shown in August 2008 before a small group of foreign reporters in a hotel room in Beijing on August 6. A second screening was interrupted by hotel management, according to Reuters.

Officials in Xining, Qinghai province, charged the filmmaker with inciting separatism and replaced the Tibetan's own lawyer with a government appointee in July 2009, according to international reports.

On December 28, 2009, the Xining Intermediate People's Court in Qinghai sentenced Wangchen to six years imprisonment on subversion charges, according to a statement issued by his family.

Wangchen was born in Qinghai but moved to Lhasa as a young man, according to his published biography. He had recently relocated with his wife, Lhamo Tso, and four children to Dharamsala, India, before returning to Tibet to begin filming, according to a report published in October 2008 by the *South China Morning Post*.

Tsetrin told CPJ that Wangchen's assistant, Gyatso, was arrested on March 23, 2008. Gyatso, released on October 15, 2008, later described having been brutally beaten by interrogators during his seven months in detention, according to *Filming for Tibet*. The Dharamsala-based Tibetan Center for Human Rights and Democracy reported that Gyatso was rearrested in March 2009 and released the next month.

IMPRISONED: MAY 9, 2008

Chen Daojun, freelance

Police arrested Chen in Sichuan province shortly after he was involved in a "strolling" nonviolent protest against a proposed petrochemical plant in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, according to English- and Chinese-language news reports.

In November 2008, he was found guilty of inciting subversion against the state, according to international news reports. He was sentenced to three years in prison.

Prosecutors introduced three articles by Chen to demonstrate a purportedly antigovernment stance, according to the Independent Chinese PEN Center. In one piece, an article for the Hong Kong-based political magazine *Zheng Ming*, Chen portrayed anti-government protests in Tibet in a positive light. That article, first published in April 2008, was reposted on overseas websites. He also published an online article objecting to the Chengdu project, but it was not among the articles cited by the prosecution.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 10, 2008

Huang Qi, *6-4tianwang*

The website *6-4tianwang* reported that its founder, Huang, had been forced into a car along with two friends on June 10, 2008. On June 18, news reports said police had detained him and charged him with illegally holding state secrets.

In the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008, Huang's website reported on the shoddy construction of schools that collapsed during the quake, killing hundreds of children, and on efforts to help victims of the disaster. His arrest came shortly after the site reported the detention of academic Zeng Hongling, who posted articles critical of earthquake relief on overseas websites.

Huang was denied access to a lawyer until September 23, 2008. One of his defense lawyers, Mo Shaoping, told reporters that Huang had been questioned about earthquake-related reports and photos on the website immediately after his arrest, but that the state secrets charge stemmed from documents saved on his computer. He said that his client was deprived of sleep during a 24-hour interrogation session after his June arrest.

Huang pleaded not guilty in closed proceedings at Chengdu Wuhou District Court on August 5, 2009. Police arrested a defense witness to prevent him from testifying on Huang's behalf, according to the New York-based advocacy group Human Rights in China.

He was sentenced to three years in prison during a brief hearing in November 2009. The reason for the unusually drawn-out legal proceedings was not clear. Analysts speculated that it indicated the weakness of the case against Huang and disagreement among authorities as to the severity of the punishment.

Beginning in 2000, Huang had spent five years in prison on charges of inciting subversion in articles posted on his website.

IMPRISONED: JULY 21, 2008

Du Daobin, freelance

Police rearrested Du during an apparent crackdown on dissidents before the Beijing Olympics in August 2008. His defense lawyer, Mo Shaoping, told CPJ that public security officials arrested the well-known Internet writer at his workplace in Yingcheng in the province of Hubei.

Du had been serving a four-year probationary term, handed down by a court on June 11, 2004, for inciting subversion of state power in articles published on Chinese and overseas websites. The probationary conditions included reporting monthly to authorities and obtaining permission to travel. Alleging that he had violated the conditions, police revoked Du's probation and jailed him, according to news reports.

Mo told CPJ in October 2008 that the defense team had sought to challenge the police decision, but Chinese law does not allow such appeals. Du was in Hanxi Prison in Wuhan, the provincial capital.

IMPRISONED: AUGUST 2008

Mehbube Abrak (Mehbube Ablesh), freelance

Abrak, a state radio employee in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, was serving a three-year prison term for promoting "splittism," according to information the Chinese government provided in June 2010 to the California-based human rights advocacy organization Dui Hua Foundation.

An employee of the advertising department of the state-run Xinjiang People's Radio Station, Abrak was removed from her post in August 2008 and imprisoned. Her colleagues told the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Asia that her imprisonment stemmed from articles criticizing the government that were posted on overseas websites. Radio Free Asia referred to her as Mehbube Ablesh.

Authorities imprisoned a number of journalists who covered ethnic unrest in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, a politically sensitive issue that is considered off-limits.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 8, 2008

Liu Xiaobo, freelance

Liu, a longtime advocate for political reform in China and the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was imprisoned for "inciting subversion" through his writing.

Liu was an author of Charter 08, a document promoting universal values, human rights, and democratic reform in China, and was among its 300 original signatories. He was detained in Beijing shortly before the charter was officially released, according to international news reports.

Liu was formally charged with subversion in June 2009, and he was tried in the Beijing Number 1 Intermediate Court in December of that year. Diplomats from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Sweden were denied access to the trial, the BBC reported. On December 25, 2009, the court convicted Liu of “inciting subversion” and sentenced him to 11 years in prison and two years’ deprivation of political rights.

The verdict cited several articles Liu had posted on overseas websites, including the BBC’s Chinese-language site and the U.S.-based websites *Epoch Times* and *Observe China*, all of which had criticized Communist Party rule. Six articles were named—including pieces headlined, “So the Chinese people only deserve ‘one-party participatory democracy?’” and “Changing the regime by changing society”—as evidence that Liu had incited subversion. Liu’s income was generated by his writing, his wife told the court.

The court verdict cited Liu’s authorship and distribution of Charter 08 as further evidence of subversion. The Beijing Municipal High People’s Court upheld the verdict in February 2010.

In October, the Nobel Prize Committee awarded Liu its 2010 Peace Prize “for his long and nonviolent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.”

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 26, 2009

Kunchok Tsephel Gopey Tsang, *Chomei*

Public security officials arrested Kunchok Tsephel, an online writer, in Gannan, a Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the south of Gansu province, according to Tibetan rights groups. Kunchok Tsephel ran the Tibetan cultural issues website *Chomei*, according to the Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. Kate Saunders, U.K. communications director for the International Campaign for Tibet, told CPJ by telephone from New Delhi that she learned of his arrest from two sources.

The detention appeared to be part of a wave of arrests of writers and intellectuals in advance of the 50th anniversary of the 1959 uprising preceding the Dalai Lama’s departure from Tibet in March. The 2008

anniversary had provoked ethnic rioting in Tibetan areas, and foreign reporters were barred from the region.

In November 2009, a Gannan court sentenced Kunchok Tsephel to 15 years in prison for disclosing state secrets, according to The Associated Press.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 17, 2009

Kunga Tsayang (Gang-Nyi), freelance

The Public Security Bureau arrested Kunga Tsayang during a late-night raid, according to the Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, which said it had received the information from several sources.

An environmental activist and photographer who also wrote online articles under the penname Gang-Nyi (Sun of Snowland), Tsayang maintained his own website titled *Zindris* (Jottings) and contributed to others. He wrote several essays on politics in Tibet, including “Who is the real instigator of protests?” according to the New York-based advocacy group Students for a Free Tibet.

Kunga Tsayang was convicted of revealing state secrets and sentenced in November 2010 to five years in prison, according to the center. Sentencing was imposed during a closed court proceeding in the Tibetan area of Gannan, Gansu province.

Several Tibetans, including journalists, were arrested around the March 10 anniversary of the failed uprising in 1959 that prompted the Dalai Lama’s departure from Tibet. Security measures were heightened in the region in the aftermath of ethnic rioting in March 2008.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 28, 2009

Tan Zuoren, freelance

Tan, an environmentalist and activist, had been investigating the deaths of schoolchildren killed in the May 2008 earthquake in Sichuan province when he was detained in Chengdu.

Tan, believing that shoddy school construction contributed to the high death toll, had intended to publish the results of his investigation ahead of the first anniversary of the earthquake, according to international news reports.

His supporters believe Tan was detained because of his investigation, although the formal charges did not cite his earthquake reporting. Instead, he was charged with “inciting subversion” for writings posted

on overseas websites that criticized the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

In particular, authorities cited “1989: A witness to the final beauty,” a firsthand account of the events published on overseas websites in 2007, according to court documents. Several witnesses, including the prominent artist Ai Weiwei, were detained and blocked from testifying on Tan’s behalf at his August 2009 trial.

On February 9, 2010, Tan was convicted and sentenced to five years in prison, according to international news reports. On June 9, 2010, Sichuan Provincial High People’s Court rejected his appeal.

IMPRISONED: JULY OR AUGUST 2009

Gulmire Imin, freelance

Imin was one of an unknown number of administrators of Uighur-language Web forums who were arrested after July 2009 riots in Urumqi, in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

In August 2010, Imin was sentenced to life in prison on charges of separatism, leaking state secrets, and organizing an illegal demonstration, a witness to her trial told the U.S. government-funded broadcaster Radio Free Asia.

Imin held a local government post in Urumqi. As a sidelight, she contributed poetry and short stories to the cultural website *Salkin*, and had been invited to help as a moderator in late spring 2009, her husband, Behtiyar Omer, told CPJ.

Authorities accused Imin of being an organizer of major demonstrations on July 5, 2009, and of using the Uighur-language website to distribute information about the event, Radio Free Asia reported. Imin had been critical of the government in her online writings, readers of the website told Radio Free Asia. The website was shut after the July riots and its contents were deleted.

She was also accused of leaking state secrets by phone to her husband, who lives in Norway. Her husband said he had called her on July 5 only to be sure she was safe.

The riots, which began as a protest of the death of Uighur migrant workers in Guangdong province, turned violent and resulted in the deaths of 200 people, according to the official Chinese government count. Chinese authorities shut down the Internet in Xinjiang for months after the riots as hundreds of protesters were arrested, according to international human rights organizations and local and international media reports.

IMPRISONED: JULY OR AUGUST 2009

Nureli, *Salkin*Nijat Azat, *Shabnam*

Authorities imprisoned Nureli, who goes by one name, and Azat in an apparent crackdown on Uighur-language website managers. Azat was sentenced to 10 years and Nureli three years for endangering state security, according to international news reports. The precise dates of their arrests and convictions were not clear.

Their sites, which have been shut down by the government, had run news articles and discussion groups concerning Uighur issues. *The New York Times* cited friends and family members of the men who said they were prosecuted because they had failed to respond quickly enough when they were ordered to delete content that discussed the difficulties of life in Xinjiang.

IMPRISONED: AUGUST 7, 2009

Dilixiati Paerhati, *Diyarim*

Paerhati, who edited the popular Uighur-language website *Diyarim*, was one of several online forum administrators arrested after ethnic violence in Urumqi in July 2009.

Paerhati was sentenced to a five-year prison term in July 2010 on charges of endangering state security, according to international news reports. He was detained and interrogated about riots in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region on July 24, 2009, but released without charge after eight days.

Agents seized Paerhati from his apartment on August 7, 2009, although the government issued no formal notice of arrest, his U.K.-based brother, Dilimulati, told Amnesty International. International news reports, citing his brother, said authorities had demanded Paerhati delete anti-government comments on the website.

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 1, 2009

Gheyrat Niyaz (Hailaite Niyazi), *Uighurbiz*

Security officials arrested website manager Niyaz, sometimes referred to as Hailaite Niyazi, in his home in the regional capital, Urumqi, according to international news reports. He was convicted under sweeping charges of “endangering state security.”

According to international media reports, Niyaz was punished because of an August 2, 2009, interview with *Yazhou Zhoukan* (Asia

Weekly), a Chinese-language magazine based in Hong Kong. In the interview, Niyaz said authorities had not taken steps to prevent violence in the July 2009 ethnic violence that broke out in China's far-western Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. At the time, media reports said about 200 people had been killed in the violence.

Niyaz, who once worked for the state newspapers *Xinjiang Legal News* and *Xinjiang Economic Daily*, also managed and edited the website *Uighurbiz* until June 2009. A statement posted on the website quoted Niyaz's wife as saying that while he did give interviews to foreign media, he had no malicious intentions.

Authorities blamed local and international Uighur sites for fueling the violence between Uighurs and Han Chinese in the predominantly Muslim Xinjiang region. *Uighurbiz* founder Ilham Tohti was questioned about the contents of the site and detained for more than six weeks, according to international news reports.

IMPRISONED: APRIL 6, 2010

Tashi Rabten, freelance

Public security officials detained Rabten, a student at Northwest Minorities University in Lanzhou, according to *Phayul*, a pro-Tibetan independence news website based in New Delhi. No formal charges or trial proceedings had been disclosed by late year.

Rabten edited the magazine *Shar Dugri* (Eastern Snow Mountain) in the aftermath of ethnic rioting in Tibet in March 2008. The magazine was swiftly banned by local authorities, according to the International Campaign for Tibet. The journalist later self-published a collection of articles titled "Written in Blood," saying in the introduction that "after an especially intense year of the usual soul-destroying events, something had to be said," the campaign reported. The book and the magazine discussed democracy and recent anti-China protests; the book was banned after he had distributed 400 copies, according to the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Asia.

Rabten had been detained once before, in 2009, according to Radio Free Asia and international Tibetan rights groups.

IMPRISONED: MAY 24, 2010

Dokru Tsultrim (Zhuori Cicheng), freelance

A monk at Ngaba Gomang Monastery in western Sichuan province, Dokru Tsultrim was detained in April 2009 for alleged anti-government writings and articles in support of the Dalai Lama, according

to the Dharamsala-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and the International Campaign for Tibet. Released after a month in custody, he was detained again in May 2010, according to the Dharamsala-based *Tibet Post International*. No formal charges or trial proceedings had been disclosed by late 2010.

At the time of his 2010 arrest, security officials raided his room at the monastery, confiscated documents, and demanded his laptop, a relative told *The Tibet Post International*. He and a friend had planned to publish the writings of Tibetan youths detailing an April 2010 earthquake in Qinghai province, the relative said.

Dokru Tsultrim, originally from Qinghai province, which is on the Tibetan plateau, also managed a private Tibetan journal, *Khawai Tsesok* (Life of Snow), which ceased publication after his 2009 arrest, the center said. “Zhuori Cicheng” is the Chinese transliteration of his name, according to Tashi Choephel Jamatsang at the center, who provided CPJ with details by e-mail.

IMPRISONED: JUNE AND JULY 2010

Buddha, freelance

Jangtse Donkho (Rongke), freelance

Kalsang Jinpa (Garmi), freelance

The three men, contributors to the banned Tibetan-language magazine *Shar Dngri* (Eastern Snow Mountain), were detained in Aba, a Tibetan area in southwestern Sichuan province, the U.S. government-funded broadcaster Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported.

Jangtse Donkho, an author and editor who wrote under the penname Nyen, meaning “Wild One,” was detained on June 21, RFA reported. The name on his official ID is Rongke, according to the International Campaign for Tibet. Many Tibetans use only one name.

Buddha, a practicing physician, was detained on June 26 at the hospital where he worked in the town of Aba. Kalsang Jinpa, who wrote under the penname Garmi, meaning “Blacksmith,” was detained on June 19, the broadcaster reported, citing local sources.

On October 21, they were tried together in the Aba Intermediate Court. The charge was not disclosed, but a source told RFA that it may have been inciting separatism based on articles they had written in the aftermath of ethnic rioting in March 2008. No verdict had been disclosed in late year.

Shar Dngri was a collection of essays published in July 2008 and

distributed in western China before authorities banned the publication, according to the advocacy group International Campaign for Tibet, which translated the journal. The writers assailed Chinese human rights abuses against Tibetans, lamented a history of repression, and questioned official media accounts of the March 2008 unrest.

Buddha's essay, "Hindsight and Reflection," was presented as part of the prosecution, RFA reported. According to a translation of the essay by the International Campaign for Tibet, Buddha wrote: "If development means even the slightest difference between today's standards and the living conditions of half a century ago, why the disparity between the pace of construction and progress in Tibet and in mainland China?"

The editor of *Shar Dugri*, Tashi Rabten, was also jailed in 2010.

Cuba: 4

IMPRISONED: MARCH 18, 2003

Pedro Argüelles Morán, Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas

Independientes

The Cuban government freed 17 journalists arrested in the Black Spring crackdown of 2003, but four independent reporters and editors remained in prison when CPJ conducted its annual census on December 1.

Argüelles Morán was sentenced in April 2003 to 20 years in prison under Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy, which punishes anyone who commits acts "aiming at subverting the internal order of the nation and destroying its political, economic, and social system."

Argüelles Morán, director of the independent news agency Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas Independientes in the central province of Ciego de Ávila, was being held at the Canaleta Prison in his home province, his wife, Yolanda Vera Nerey, told CPJ. She said her husband, 62, had bone and respiratory ailments and cataracts in both eyes.

In July 2010, the Catholic Church brokered an agreement with Cuban authorities to release 52 political prisoners arrested in the 2003 crackdown. Spanish government officials also participated in the talks. The Cuban government did not explicitly demand that freed prisoners

leave the country as a condition of release, but it's clear that is what authorities wanted: All 17 of the reporters released as of December 1 were immediately exiled to Spain. (One later relocated to Chile.)

Three journalists swept up in the 2003 crackdown and a fourth arrested in 2009 remained in jail when CPJ conducted its December 1 census. The remaining detainees from the 2003 crackdown expressed their desire to stay in Cuba upon release, the reporters' families told CPJ. A story published in September by the Madrid-based daily *El País* quoted Spanish officials as saying that imprisoned reporters who wanted to stay in Cuba upon release would be freed through a parole program. The Cuban government, however, did not confirm those plans.

Albert Santiago Du Bouchet Hernández, the detainee arrested in 2009, had not been offered release under any condition as of December 1, according to the Havana-based Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 18, 2003

Iván Hernández Carrillo, Patria

A reporter for the independent news agency Patria in the western city of Colón, Hernández Carrillo was sentenced in April 2003 to 25 years in prison under Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy. Hernández Carrillo, 39, was subjected to harassment and assault while in prison, according to his mother, Asunción Carrillo, who said prison authorities had encouraged inmates to attack him.

Although the government released a number of political prisoners in 2010, Hernández Carrillo was among four Cuban journalists still in prison when CPJ conducted its annual census on December 1. Three had been swept up in the 2003 crackdown and a fourth was arrested in 2009.

In July 2010, the Catholic Church brokered an agreement with Cuban authorities to release 52 political prisoners, including 20 journalists, who were arrested during the 2003 crackdown. Spanish government officials also participated in the talks. The Cuban government did not explicitly demand that freed prisoners leave the country as a condition of release, but it's clear that is what authorities wanted: All 17 of the reporters released as of December 1 were immediately exiled to Spain. (One later relocated to Chile.)

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After July talks between the government and the Catholic Church, Hernández Carrillo was transferred from a prison in Santa Clara province, about 90 miles (150 kilometers) from his family's home in Matanzas province, to La Henequenera Prison in his home province, his mother told CPJ. He suffered from hypertension and gastritis.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 19, 2003

Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, Grupo de Trabajo Decoro

Maseda Gutiérrez was arrested in the March 2003 crackdown on dissidents and the independent press. He was charged under Article 91 of the Cuban penal code for acting "against the independence or the territorial integrity of the state" and Law 88 for the Protection of Cuba's National Independence and Economy. In a closed-door summary trial the following month, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

An engineer with a graduate degree in nuclear physics, Maseda Gutiérrez, 67, began working as an independent journalist in 1995 and was a founding member of the independent news agency Grupo de Trabajo Decoro, according to his wife, Laura Pollán Toledo. In 2008, he was awarded CPJ's International Press Freedom Award.

Although the government released a number of political prisoners in 2010, Maseda Gutiérrez was among four Cuban journalists still in prison when CPJ conducted its annual census on December 1. Three had been swept up in the 2003 crackdown and a fourth was arrested in 2009.

In July 2010, the Catholic Church brokered an agreement with Cuban authorities to release 52 political prisoners, including 20 journalists, who were arrested during the 2003 crackdown. Spanish government officials also participated in the talks. The Cuban government did not explicitly demand that freed prisoners leave the country as a condition of release, but it's clear that is what authorities wanted: All 17 of the reporters released as of December 1 were immediately exiled to Spain. (One later relocated to Chile.)

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After July talks between the government and the Catholic Church, Maseda Gutiérrez was transferred from a prison in western Matanzas province, a four-hour bus ride from his home in Havana City, to the 15-80 Prison in Havana province, a one-hour ride from his home, his wife said. She said her husband suffered from high blood pressure and skin ailments.

IMPRISONED: APRIL 18, 2009

Albert Santiago Du Bouchet Hernández, Havana Press

Police arrested Du Bouchet Hernández, director of the independent news agency Havana Press, as he was visiting relatives outside the city. Officers alleged that the journalist had shouted anti-government slogans in the street.

In May 2009, Du Bouchet Hernández was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of “disrespect” and distribution of enemy propaganda. Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, president of the Havana-based Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation, told CPJ that the journalist had been in a summary proceeding without the assistance of a defense lawyer. Miriam Herrera, an independent journalist based in Havana, told CPJ that Du Bouchet Hernández had reported on social issues, which could have upset local authorities.

In 2010, Du Bouchet Hernández was being held at the Melena II Prison, in Havana province, colleague Roberto De Jesús Guerra told CPJ. He faced appalling prison conditions, including poor food and overflowing wastewater, De Jesús Guerra said. Du Bouchet Hernández was subjected to beatings, but continued reporting from prison on jail conditions, prisoners’ life stories, and human rights violations, CPJ research showed.

Du Bouchet Hernández was not included in a July 2010 agreement between the Cuban government and the Catholic Church to release 52 political prisoners swept up in the 2003 crackdown on dissidents and the independent press. As of December 1, he had not been offered his release under any conditions, according to the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation.

Du Bouchet Hernández had also been jailed in 2005 on “disrespect” charges and sentenced to one year in prison after he enraged authorities with his coverage of a two-day gathering that brought together 200 opposition activists and guests to discuss ways to create democracy in Cuba. Du Bouchet Hernández was released in August 2006 after completing his sentence.

Egypt: 1

IMPRISONED: JANUARY 31, 2009

Magdy Hussein, *Al-Shaab*

Hussein, who once edited the long-banned opposition newspaper *Al-Shaab*, was initially arrested on charges of illegally crossing into Gaza. In February 2009, a military court sentenced Hussein, a vocal critic of President Hosni Mubarak, to a two-year prison sentence.

While in prison, authorities resurrected a 14-year-old criminal defamation case stemming from opinion pieces in *Al-Shaab* that accused then-Interior Minister Hassan El Alfy of corruption and mismanagement. In 1996, a court convicted Hussein of defamation and fined him 15,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$2,631).

Hussein’s lawyers appealed the ruling at the time to the Court of Cassation, Egypt’s highest court, but the case sat dormant until 2010, when the court abruptly decided to hear the appeal. That the appeal was heard after such a long dormancy was seen by human rights lawyers as a political move aimed at keeping Hussein in prison.

The Court of Cassation ordered a lower court to retry the defamation case. A Cairo court then issued a new decision in mid-June, imposing a one-year prison term. The new verdict “took everybody by surprise and obviously came about to keep an influential writer and opposition figure behind bars and far away from future parliamentary and presidential elections,” Gamal Eid, executive director of the Arab Network for Human Rights Information, told CPJ.

Eritrea: 17

IMPRISONED: JULY 2000

Ghebrehiwet Keleta, *Tsigenay*

Security agents arrested Keleta, a reporter for the private weekly *Tsigenay*, while he was on his way to work in July 2000. He has not been heard from since. Sources told CPJ at the time that the reporter was being held in connection with the government's overall crack-down on the press.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 2001

Said Abdelkader, *Admas*

Yusuf Mohamed Ali, *Tsigenay*

Amanuel Asrat, *Zemen*

Temesken Ghebreyesus, *Keste Debena*

Mattewos Habteab, *Meqaleh*

Dawit Habtemichael, *Meqaleh*

Medhanie Haile, *Keste Debena*

Dawit Isaac, *Setit*

Seyoum Tsehaye, freelance

Eritrean security forces jailed at least 10 local journalists without charge or trial in the days after September 18, 2001. The arrests took place less than a week after authorities effectively shut down the country's fledgling private press.

Authorities vaguely accused the journalists of avoiding the country's compulsory military service, threatening national security, and failing to observe licensing requirements. CPJ research indicates that the crackdown was part of a government drive to crush political dissent ahead of elections scheduled for December 2001, which were subsequently canceled. The private press had reported on divisions within the ruling party, the Eritrean People's Defense Force, and had criticized the increasingly authoritarian nature of President Isaias Afewerki's regime.

The journalists were initially held incommunicado at a police station in Asmara, where they began a hunger strike on March 31, 2002, and smuggled a message out of jail demanding due process. The government responded by transferring them to secret locations and has since refused to divulge their health, whereabouts, or legal status. No charges, court proceedings, or convictions have ever been publicly disclosed.

“I don’t know them at all,” presidential spokesman Yemane Ghebremeskel said in an October 2010 response to CPJ inquiries seeking basic information on the detainees. Several CPJ sources said that most of the journalists were being held in a secret prison camp called Eiraeiro, near the village of Gahtelay.

CPJ has confirmed that one of the 10 journalists initially arrested has died. Publisher and editor Fesshaye “Joshua” Yohannes, 47, a 2002 recipient of CPJ’s International Press Freedom Award, died in custody on an unknown date, several sources confirmed to CPJ in early 2007.

At least two reports have said that other journalists also died in custody. In April 2010, the Ethiopian station Radio Wegahta broadcast an interview with Eyob Bahta Habtemariam, an Eritrean defector described as a former supervisory guard at two prisons northeast of Asmara. Habtemariam claimed that extreme heat had taken the life of *Tsigenay* editor Ali in 2003, while *Keste Debena* editor Haile had died from unspecified maltreatment in 2004. He said *Admas* editor Abdelkader had taken his own life in 2003, and that *Meqaleh* editor Habteab had also died of maltreatment in 2006.

Emmanuel Hadgo, a spokesman for the Eritrean Information Ministry, told CPJ that Habtemariam had never worked for the government and that the statements were untrue. He did not respond directly to the question of whether the journalists were alive.

An unbylined 2006 report published on several websites, including *Aigaforum*, a site considered close to the Ethiopian government, noted the deaths of three detained journalists. The report cited the deaths of “Mr. Yusuf,” believed by CPJ sources to refer to Yusuf Mohamed Ali of *Tsigenay*; “Mr. Medhane Tewelde,” believed to refer to Medhanie Haile of *Keste Debena*; and “Mr. Said,” believed to refer to Said Abdelkader of *Admas*. Although details of the report could not be independently corroborated, CPJ sources considered it to be generally credible.

CPJ continues to seek corroboration of the reported deaths. It lists the four journalists on the 2010 prison census as a means of holding the government responsible for their fates.

The case of *Setit* co-owner Isaac, an Eritrean with Swedish citizenship, has drawn considerable attention in Sweden, where diplomats, journalists, and grassroots activists campaigned for his release. Isaac was briefly released on November 19, 2005, and allowed to phone his family and a friend in Sweden, but was returned to jail two days later with no explanation.

Asked about Isaac's "crime" in a 2009 interview with Swedish free-lance journalist Donald Boström, Afewerki replied, "I don't know." He added: "I don't even care where he is or what he is doing. He did a big mistake." In October, Isaac was honored with the World Association of Newspapers' Golden Pen of Freedom.

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 15, 2002

Hamid Mohammed Said, Eri-TV

During a July 2002 fact-finding mission to the capital, Asmara, a CPJ delegation confirmed that Eritrean authorities had arrested three state media reporters in February 2002 as part of the government's mass crackdown on the press, which began in September 2001. Reporters Saadia Ahmed and Saleh Aljezeeri were released, according to CPJ sources.

Eri-TV reporter Said was believed still being held in an undisclosed location, sources told CPJ. The government has ignored numerous inquiries from CPJ and other organizations seeking information about the journalist's whereabouts, health, and legal status.

IMPRISONED: JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2009

Bereket Misguina, Radio Bana

Mulubruhan Weldegebriel, Radio Bana

Ghirmai Abraham, Radio Bana

Issak Abraham, Radio Bana

Meles Nguse, Radio Bana

Yirgalem Fesseha, Radio Bana

Eritrean security forces arrested six government journalists as part of a crackdown on staffers connected to Radio Bana, an Education Ministry-sponsored station in Asmara, according to several CPJ sources. Authorities ordered the arrests based on suspicions that the journalists and other staffers had provided information to foreign-based Eritrean opposition organizations and news websites, according to the sources. The detainees were being held in Mai Srwa and Adi Abieto military camps.

The journalists had worked for other state media. Ghirmai Abraham had been producer of an arts program, and Issak Abraham had produced a Sunday entertainment show on state Radio Dimtsi Hafash.

Misguina (also a film director and scriptwriter), Nguse (also a poet), and Fesseha (a poet as well) were columnists for the state-run daily *Hadas Eritrea*. Weldegebriel was the author of a column on celebrities for *Hadas Eritrea*.

Ethiopia: 4

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 2006

Saleh Idris Gama, Eri-TV

Tesfalidet Kidane Tesfazghi, Eri-TV

Ethiopian authorities have refused to provide information about the whereabouts, legal status, or health of Gama and Tesfazghi, Eritrean state television journalists who were arrested by Kenyan border authorities in late 2006 after the Ethiopian military invasion of southern Somalia.

Tesfazghi, a producer, and Gama, a cameraman, were held for three weeks by Kenyan authorities and then handed to the Ethiopian-backed Somali transitional government in January 2007, according to the Eritrean Foreign Ministry. In April 2007, the Ethiopian government acknowledged that it had detained 41 people who were “captured” in Somalia on suspicion of “terrorism,” according to news reports.

In a video aired on state television, the Ethiopian government suggested the journalists were involved in military activities in Somalia. Though Eritrean journalists were often conscripted into military service, the video did not present any evidence linking the journalists to military activity. A Foreign Ministry statement said some detainees would be tried “before the competent military court” but did not identify them by name.

In August 2010, government spokesman Shemelis Kemal would not disclose the journalists’ whereabouts, their health, or legal status. “The two people are not even journalists,” he said.

IMPRISONED: APRIL 22, 2010

Haileyesus Worku, Ethiopian Radio and Television

Abdulsemed Mohammed, Ethiopian Radio and Television

The Ethiopian Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission ordered the arrests of editor Worku and producer Mohammed of the government-

controlled national broadcaster on charges of smuggling station material to an unidentified third party, local journalists told CPJ.

A week after their arrests, Ethiopian government spokesman Bereket Simon told CPJ the journalists had been “caught red-handed” but would not provide any details. Prosecutors amended charges to include corruption and copyright violations while the journalists were in pretrial detention in Kality Prison in late year.

Local journalists said Worku was accused of trying to copy footage of the government’s brutal repression of the May 2005 post-election protests, and that Mohammed was lending technical assistance.

A few months before his arrest, Mohammed, a 14-year veteran of the station, was demoted from senior editor to an entertainment producer’s job as part of civil service changes that put government loyalists in ranking positions, according to local journalists.

Gambia: 1

IMPRISONED: JULY 7, 2006

“Chief” Ebrima Manneh, *Daily Observer*

Agents of the National Intelligence Agency picked up Manneh, a reporter with the government-controlled *Daily Observer*, after he tried to print a BBC story critical of President Yahya Jammeh. Colleagues witnessed his arrest by two plainclothes officers at the premises of the *Daily Observer*.

Manneh has been seen but a few times since his arrest. A fellow journalist reported seeing him on the grounds of Fatoto Prison in late 2006. The next year, witnesses told the Ghana-based press freedom group Media Foundation of West Africa that Manneh was being treated for high blood pressure at the Royal Victorian Teaching Hospital in Banjul.

Despite the sightings, Gambian security agencies and police have consistently refused to provide information on the journalist’s whereabouts, health, or legal status. In its periodic review submission to the U.N. Human Rights Council in February 2010, a Gambian delegation led by Attorney General and Minister of Justice Marie Saine-Firdaus declared that “the government has investigated his whereabouts, but to no avail.”

The case has galvanized a variety of forces to pressure the Gambian government. In March 2010, U.S. Sen. Richard J. Durbin and four other senators sent a letter to Kamallesh Sharma, secretary-general of the Commonwealth of Nations, urging him to investigate Manneh's case. In 2009, the U.N. Human Rights Council's Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions called for Manneh's release.

Indonesia: 1

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 9, 2010

Erwin Arnada, *Playboy Indonesia*

Arnada, editor of the now-defunct *Playboy Indonesia*, surrendered to authorities at Cipinang Prison in East Jakarta to begin a two-year sentence on charges of public indecency. The Supreme Court, reversing two lower-court acquittals, convicted Arnada on indecency charges related to material published in a 2006 issue of the magazine. Although the Supreme Court's ruling was dated 2009, it was not publicly disclosed until August 2009.

Soon after opening, the magazine came under fire from the hard-line Islamic Defenders Front, or FPI. After militants sought to vandalize the magazine's Jakarta office, *Playboy Indonesia* moved to the island of Bali. But political pressure eventually led to Arnada's arrest in 2007 and to the closing of the magazine after just 10 issues.

By numerous accounts, the magazine was considered no more provocative than numerous other publications available in Indonesia. FPI leader Ahmad Shobri Lubis acknowledged to *The New York Times* that *Playboy Indonesia's* photographs were less revealing than those printed in many Indonesian publications.

Defense lawyer Todung Mulya Lubis said an appeal was being pursued. He said Arnada was being held in the general population at Cipinang, a high-security facility that has often been used to hold political activists and accused terrorists.

Iran: 34

IMPRISONED: JANUARY 25, 2007

Adnan Hassanpour, *A50*

Security agents seized Hassanpour, former editor of the now-defunct Kurdish-Persian weekly *Aso*, in his hometown of Marivan, Kurdistan province, according to news reports.

In July 2007, a Revolutionary Court convicted Hassanpour on anti-state charges and sentenced him to death. After a series of appeals and reversals, he was sentenced in May 2010 to 15 years in prison, defense lawyer Saleh Nikbakht told the Reporters and Human Rights Activists News Agency.

The government's case against Hassanpour amounted to a series of assertions by security agents, defense attorney Sirvan Hosmandi told CPJ in 2008. Hassanpour's sister, Lily, told CPJ that she believed his critical writings were behind the charges.

IMPRISONED: JULY 1, 2007

Mohammad Seddigh Kaboudvand, *Payam-e-Mardom*

Plainclothes security officials arrested journalist and human rights activist Kaboudvand at his Tehran office, according to Amnesty International and CPJ sources. He was being held at Evin Prison in Tehran.

Authorities accused Kaboudvand, head of the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan and managing editor of the weekly *Payam-e-Mardom*, of acting against national security and engaging in propaganda against the state, according to his organization's website. A Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced him to 11 years in prison. Kaboudvand was reported in ill health, but authorities refused requests for medical furlough. Based on their visits, family members feared he had suffered a stroke, the Kurdish human rights website *Rawa News* reported.

Kaboudvand's lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh, was herself taken into custody in September 2010, according to news reports. Sotoudeh's arrest was part of a government crackdown on lawyers seeking to defend political prisoners and journalists. Lawyers have been intimidated, detained, and audited for tax evasion.

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 8, 2008

Mojtaba Lotfi, freelance

A clergyman and blogger, Lotfi was arrested by security forces on a warrant issued by the religious Clergy Court in Qom. Authorities accused him of publishing the views of Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, the now-deceased cleric who had criticized President Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad's positions.

Authorities did not specify particular articles or publications in which the views were supposedly cited. In November 2009, Lotfi was convicted of several charges, including spreading antistate information, and sentenced to four years in prison followed by a period of exile, according to online reports.

On July 10, the Human Rights House of Iran reported that Lotfi had been transferred to the remote village of Ashtian for a period of enforced internal exile. News reports were conflicted on the period of exile.

IMPRISONED: NOVEMBER 2008

Hossein Derakhshan, freelance

On December 30, 2008, a spokesman for the Iranian Judiciary confirmed in a press conference in Tehran that Derakhshan, a well-known Iranian-Canadian blogger, had been detained since November 2008 in connection with comments he allegedly made about a key cleric, according to local and international news reports. The exact date of Derakhshan's arrest is unknown, but news of his detention first appeared on November 17, 2008, on a website close to the Iranian intelligence apparatus. At the time, *Jahan News* reported that he had confessed to "spying for Israel" during the preliminary interrogation.

Known as the "Blogfather" for his pioneering online work, Derakhshan started blogging after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. A former writer for reformist newspapers, he also contributed opinion pieces to *The Guardian* of London and *The New York Times*. The journalist, who lived in Canada during most of the prior decade, returned to Tehran a few weeks before his detention, *The Washington Post* reported. In November 2009, the BBC Persian service reported that Derakhshan's family had sought information about his whereabouts and the charges he faced, and expressed concern about having very limited contact with him.

On September 29, the government announced that Derakhshan had been sentenced to 19 and a half years in prison, along with a five-year ban on "membership in political parties and activities in the media," according to the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran and other sources. Derakhshan has spent most of his imprisonment in solitary confinement at Evin Prison, according to multiple sources. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, citing a source

close to the journalist's family, said Derakhshan had been beaten and coerced into making false confessions about having ties to U.S. and Israeli intelligence services.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 2008

Nader Karimi Jooni, freelance

Jooni, arrested in late 2008, was sentenced to 10 years in prison on January 11, 2010, on charges of mutiny, espionage, and acting against national security, according to the reformist website *Kalame*. He denied the charges and said the case was politicized.

Jooni, a political editor and writer for now-defunct publications such as *Gozaresh*, *Fekr*, *Jahan-e-Sanat*, and *Siasat-e-Rooz*, was placed in Evin Prison's Ward 209, where political prisoners are held. He is an Iran-Iraq War veteran who requires continuing medical care, *Kalame* reported. In April, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran said Jooni was in poor health.

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 13, 2009

Mohammad Pour Abdollah, freelance

In December 2009, a Revolutionary Court convicted Pour Abdollah, a Tehran university student and a blogger, on charges of "illegal congregation, actions against national security, and propagating against the Islamic Republic of Iran," according to the BBC Persian service website. Pour Abdollah's original six-year sentence was reduced to three years, the Human Rights Activists News Agency reported in April.

Several news websites said he had been tortured while in custody at Ghezel Hesar Prison, a facility that houses hardened criminals. Since his detention, Pour Abdollah's blog has been disabled; only his last post can be accessed, on another writer's blog. In that post, Pour Abdollah writes critically about the political, social, and economic conditions in Iran and elsewhere.

IMPRISONED: MAY 22, 2009

Morteza Moradpour, *Yazligh*

Moradpour, who wrote for *Yazligh*, a children's magazine, is serving a three-year prison term on charges of "propagating against the Islamic Republic of Iran," "mutiny," and "illegal congregation," according to the Committee of Human Rights Reporters. An appeals court in Azerbaijan province upheld the sentence, according to the committee's February 9 report.

Moradpour was arrested in 2009 along with several family members during a protest over Azeri-language rights in Tabriz in northwestern Azerbaijan province, according to the Committee of Human Rights Reporters. Two issues of *Yazligh* were used as evidence in the trial against him, the news website *Bizim Tabriz* reported.

Moradpour's attorney said the charges were politically motivated and fabricated, the news website *Tabriz Sesi* reported. The Committee of Human Rights Reporters said pressure on members of Azeri civil society had increased as the government attempted to marginalize the ethnic minority.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 2009

Ahmad Zaid-Abadi, freelance

Zaid-Abadi, who wrote a weekly column for *Rooz Online*, a Farsi- and English-language reformist news website, was arrested in Tehran, according to news reports. Zaid-Abadi is also the director of the Organization of University Alumni of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a supporter of defeated 2009 presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi.

On November 23, 2009, Zaid-Abadi was sentenced to six years in prison, five years' exile to Gonabad in Khorasan province, and a "lifetime deprivation of any political activity," including "interviews, speech, and analysis of events, whether in written or oral form," according to Deutsche Welle's Persian website. An appeals court upheld the sentence on January 2, according to *Advar News*.

In February 2010, Zaid-Abadi and fellow journalist Massoud Bastani were transferred to Rajaei Shahr Prison, a facility known for housing people convicted of drug-related crimes. Zaid-Abadi's wife, Mahdieh Mohammadi, said prison conditions were crowded and unsanitary, the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran reported. She said she feared malnutrition and the spread of disease.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 14, 2009

Omid Salimi, *Nesf-e-Jehan*

Salimi, a photographer who worked for *Nesf-e-Jehan* newspaper in Esfahan, was arrested after being summoned by the Revolutionary Guards to pick up belongings confiscated during an earlier arrest, according to Human Rights and Democracy Activists in Iran, a local human rights watchdog. Salimi had been detained in December 2008 and had spent three months in prison on unspecified charges.

After his 2009 arrest, Salimi was transferred to Evin Prison in Tehran, according to the Iranian Reporters and Human Rights Activists News Agency. No formal charges or trial proceedings have been disclosed.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 14, 2009

Kayvan Samimi, *Nameh*

Samimi, manager of the now-defunct monthly *Nameh*, was serving a six-year prison sentence, along with a 15-year ban on “political, social, and cultural activities,” the *Aftab News* website reported.

Initially held at Evin Prison, Samimi was subjected to mistreatment. In February 2010, he was transferred to solitary confinement after objecting to poor prison conditions, according to Free Iranian Journalists, a website devoted to documenting cases of jailed reporters and editors. In July, Samimi and 14 other prisoners went on a 16-day hunger strike to protest abuse at Evin Prison. After they broke their strike, they were not allowed to visit with their families or call them for a month, the reformist news website *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* reported. In November, Samimi was transferred to Rajaee Shah Prison in Karaj, which houses violent criminals, according to news reports.

Samimi’s lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh, was herself taken into custody in September 2010, news reports said. Sotoudeh’s arrest was part of a government crackdown on lawyers seeking to defend political prisoners and journalists. Lawyers have been intimidated, detained, and in some cases audited for tax evasion.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 19, 2009

Bahman Ahmadi Amouee, freelance

Amouee, a contributor to reformist newspapers such as *Mihan*, *Hamshahri*, *Jame’e*, *Khordad*, *Norooz*, and *Sharq*, and the author of an eponymous blog, was arrested with his wife, Zhila Bani-Yaghoub, according to news reports. Bani-Yaghoub, editor-in-chief of the *Iranian Women’s Club*, a news website focusing on women’s rights, was released on bail in August 2009, according to the BBC Persian service.

In January 2010, Amouee was sentenced to 34 lashes, along with seven years and four months in prison. In March, an appeals court reduced the sentence to five years in prison, according to *Roouz Online*.

Amouee was being held in Tehran’s Evin Prison, at least part of the time in solitary confinement, according to news reports. His wife told

Roos Online in February that Amouee was sharing a 115-square-foot (10-square-meter) cell with 40 other prisoners.

In July, Amouee and 14 other prisoners staged a 16-day hunger strike to protest mistreatment at Evin Prison. Prison officials punished them by denying family visits for a month, *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* reported.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 19, 2009

Hamzeh Karami, *Jomhoriyat*

Karami, editor of the now-defunct reformist news website *Jomhoriyat*, was arrested on June 19, 2009, according to the website *Nedaye Sabz-e-Azadi*. Iranian authorities had banned *Jomhoriyat* just one week before, the *Asr-e-Iran* news website reported.

He was charged with “acting against national security through congregation and mutiny intended to disrupt public order,” “propagating against the regime,” “propagating falsehoods,” and embezzlement, according to the semi-official Fars News Agency. His original 16-year prison sentence was reduced to 11 years on appeal, the Committee of Human Rights Reporters reported in May 2010. He was also fined the equivalent of US\$600,000.

Karami, a close ally of reformist politician Mehdi Hashemi Rafsanjani, was coerced into confessions implicating himself and others, according to Reporters and Human Rights Activists of Iran.

Despite his conviction, Karami paid a US\$2 million bail and was released on furlough in May 14, 2010, according to the *Kalame* reformist news website. But authorities sent him back to prison after he refused to testify against Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the former president turned government critic.

In an August 2010 open letter to the prosecutor-general, Karami said he had been tortured in custody, coerced into making false confessions, threatened with rape, told his family members were being subjected to violence, denied access to a lawyer, and forced to witness other inmates being beaten. *Kalame* reported in September that Karami had been denied medical leave for his heart condition.

IMPRISONED: JULY 3, 2009

Issa Saharkhiz, freelance

Saharkhiz, a columnist for the reformist news websites *Roos Online* and *Norooz* and a founding member of the Association of Iranian Journalists, was arrested while traveling in northern Iran, the

association said in a statement. His lawyer said his client was charged with “participation in riots,” “encouraging others to participate in riots,” and “insulting the supreme leader,” according to *Rooz Online*.

Saharkhiz was sentenced to three years in prison, a five-year ban on political and journalistic activities, and a one-year ban on foreign travel, the reformist news website *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* reported in September 2010. In an interview with Radio Zamaaneh, Mehdi Saharkhiz said his father would not appeal the court’s decision. “He said that all sentencing is made under [Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei’s direct supervision and the judiciary has nothing to do with it. Therefore, neither the lower court, nor the appeals court is official in any way, and they are only for show.”

Saharkhiz has had a long career in journalism. He worked for 15 years for IRNA, Iran’s official news agency, and ran its New York office for part of that time. He returned to Iran in 1997 to work in Mohammad Khatami’s Ministry of Islamic Guidance, in charge of domestic publications. Journalist Ahmad Bourghani and Saharkhiz came to be known as the architects of a period of relative freedom for the press in Iran. After Saharkhiz was forced to leave the ministry and was banned from government service in a trial, he founded a reformist newspaper, *Akhbar-e-Eghtesad*, and monthly magazine, *Aftab*, both of which were eventually banned. He wrote articles directly critical of Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader.

During his imprisonment, which began at Evin Prison, Saharkhiz was subjected to constant pressure, including being kept in a prison yard overnight in freezing temperatures without shoes or socks, according to *Rooz Online*. Saharkhiz waged a hunger strike in March, according to the *Norooz* news website, which quoted his son as saying that he had lost about 45 pounds (20 kilograms). He was later transferred to a prison in remote Karaj.

In August 2010, Saharkhiz filed a lawsuit in a U.S. court against Nokia Siemens Network concerning the sale of surveillance technology to the Islamic Republic of Iran. The complaint alleged that the technology was used to locate him for arrest in 2009, the U.S. government-funded Radio Farda reported. In a statement, Nokia Siemens said its actions had not led to Saharkhiz’s abuse.

Saharkhiz’s lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh, was herself taken into custody in September 2010, according to news reports. Sotoudeh’s arrest was part of a government crackdown on lawyers seeking to defend political prisoners and journalists. Lawyers have been intimidated, detained, and in some cases audited for tax evasion.

IMPRISONED: JULY 5, 2009

Massoud Bastani, *Farhikhtegan* and *Jomhoriyat*

Bastani, a journalist for the reformist newspaper *Farhikhtegan* and *Jomhoriyat*, a news website affiliated with the 2009 presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi, was arrested when he went to a Tehran court seeking information about his wife, journalist Mahsa Amrabadi, according to local news reports. Amrabadi, arrested with two other journalists in June 2009, was released the next month.

Bastani was among more than 100 opposition figures and journalists who faced a mass, televised judicial proceeding in August 2009 on vague antistate accusations, according to news reports. On October 20, 2009, the news site *Norooz* reported that a court had sentenced Bastani to six years in prison for “propagating against the regime and congregating and mutinying to create anarchy.”

Bastani had been editor-in-chief of the now-banned *Neda-ye Eslahat* (Voice of Reform) weekly. Bastani was transferred to the Rajaei Shahr Prison, a facility reserved for hardened criminals, along with fellow journalist Ahmad Zaid-Abadi, according to the reformist daily *Etemad*. In July, Bastani’s family told reporters that he had suffered an infection in his teeth and jaw that had gone untreated in prison, the Human Rights House of Iran reported.

IMPRISONED: JULY 12, 2009

Saeed Matin-Pour, *Yar Pag* and *Mouj Bidari*

A Revolutionary Court in Tehran convicted Matin-Pour of having “relations with foreigners” and “propagating against the regime,” according to local news reports. He was sentenced to an eight-year prison term in June 2008.

Matin-Pour was first arrested in May 2007 and released on bail. He was rearrested in July 2009 amid the government’s massive crackdown on dissidents and the press. The journalist had worked for *Yar Pag* and *Mouj Bidari* newspapers in western Azerbaijan province, in addition to writing his own blog, according to local news reports.

Matin-Pour’s wife, Atieh Taheri, told the Human Rights Activists News Agency that the journalist’s health had deteriorated in Evin Prison and that officials had denied him proper medical care. Matin-Pour suffered from heart and respiratory problems, according to news reports.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 2009

Mohammad Hossein Sohrabi Rad, *Saham News*

Sohrabi Rad was arrested on several antistate charges, including “creating public anxiety” “propagating against the regime,” and “insulting authorities,” stemming from his work on a video detailing prisoner abuse at the Kahrizak Detention Center, according to news reports. The detention center was closed in July 2009 after *Saham News*, an online news outlet, and others documented pervasive abuse of detainees.

Sohrabi Rad was sentenced to four years in prison and 74 lashes, the Human Rights House of Iran reported in June. Evin Prison officials subjected Sohrabi Rad to physical and psychological pressure, placed him in solitary confinement, and repeatedly suspended his visitation privileges, *Asr-e-Nou* reported. A prison doctor said the journalist was suffering greatly in prison, according to the website of Human Rights and Democracy Activists of Iran.

In July, Sohrabi Rad and 14 other prisoners went on a 16-day hunger strike to protest mistreatment at Evin Prison. Prison officials punished them by denying family visits for a month, *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* reported.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 5, 2009

Mohammad Davari, *Saham News*

Davari, editor-in-chief of *Saham News*, a website affiliated with 2009 presidential candidate Mehdi Karroubi, was charged with several anti-state counts, including “propagating against the regime” and “disrupting national security.” The charges stemmed from Davari’s reporting on widespread complaints of abuse and rape of inmates at Kahrizak Detention Center. The detention center was closed in July 2009 after *Saham News* and others documented the pervasive abuse.

In May 2010, Davari was sentenced to five years in prison, according to the website of Reporters and Human Rights Activists of Iran. His family said he was being held at Tehran’s Evin Prison.

Davari was tortured and coerced into making false statements against Karroubi, along with false statements recanting his Kahrizak Detention Center reports, according to an April 6 report by Reporters and Human Rights Activists. When Davari complained about poor prison conditions, officials placed him in solitary confinement and denied him family visits, according to news reports.

In November 2010, CPJ honored Davari with its International Press Freedom Award.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 16, 2009

Mehdi Mahmoudian, freelance

Mahmoudian, a political journalist and blogger, was serving a five-year prison term on charges of “mutiny against the regime” for his role in documenting complaints of rape and abuse of detainees at the Kahrizak Detention Center.

The detention center was closed in July 2009 after Mahmoudian and others documented the pervasive abuse. Mahmoudian also worked with journalist Emadeddin Baghi at the Center for the Defense of Prisoners’ Rights. Held at Rajaei Shahr Prison, Mahmoudian was in poor health and suffering from kidney ailments, according to Deutsche Welle.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 13, 2009

Seyed Hossein Ronaghi Maleki (Babak Khorramdin), freelance

Ronaghi Maleki, writing under the name Babak Khorramdin, discussed politics in a series of critical blogs that were blocked by the government. He was also a founder of an anti-censorship group known as the Iran Proxy, which was launched in 2003.

In October 2010, a Revolutionary Court sentenced Ronaghi Maleki to 15 years in prison on antistate conspiracy charges, the reformist news website *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* reported.

Ronaghi Maleki’s family said the journalist was in poor health and had severe kidney problems that were going untreated, according to the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. Defense lawyer Mohammad Ali Dadkhah told the campaign that his client had endured nearly a year in solitary confinement.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 20, 2009

Kouhyar Goudarzi, Committee of Human Rights Reporters

Goudarzi, a veteran journalist for the Committee of Human Rights Reporters, was charged with several antistate counts based on his reporting. In June 2010, he was sentenced to one year in prison, according to the Human Rights House of Iran.

Shortly after his arrest in December 2009, visitors to the prison said Goudarzi’s head was bandaged, although it was not clear how he had

sustained his injuries, according to the reformist online publication *Rooz Online*. The human rights committee said judicial authorities have sought to link the organization to external political parties.

Goudarzi staged a number of hunger strikes to protest mistreatment in Evin Prison. His mother told the Deutsche Welle Persian website that his health was deteriorating.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 20, 2009

Mohammad Nourizad, freelance

Nourizad, a blogger and documentary filmmaker, was arrested after he wrote an open letter to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei urging him to apologize for the government's post-election conduct, along with an article criticizing the head of Iran's judiciary, the BBC Persian service reported. Security officers raided Nourizad's home, seizing his computer and documents, according to the pro-opposition news website *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz*.

On April 24, 2010, Nourizad wrote another open letter to Khamenei from his prison cell at Evin Prison, criticizing him for his conduct and treatment of Iranian citizens, several news websites reported.

A Revolutionary Court sentenced Nourizad to three and a half years in prison and 50 lashes on charges of "propagating against the regime" and "insulting the supreme leader," the reformist news website *Kalame* reported April 28. Prison guards assaulted Nourizad in May, his wife told *Kalame*. Nourizad suffered head injuries that impaired his vision, she said.

Nourizad was briefly freed on a furlough in summer 2010, but was ordered back to prison after he wrote another protest letter to Khamenei, according to the group Free Iranian Journalists.

Nourizad had once written for *Kayhan*, a newspaper closely associated with conservative elements in the government, but he distanced himself from the publication after the disputed 2009 presidential election. Since then, *Kayhan* has repeatedly attacked Nourizad and his writing, according to CPJ research.

IMPRISONED: JANUARY 8, 2010

Mostafa Dehghan, freelance

Dehghan wrote about social issues for several newspapers and the women's rights website *Change for Equality*, according to *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz*. He was being held at Evin Prison.

The website *Jmin News* said Dehghan called his family in mid-January and said he did not know why he had been detained. No charges or trial proceedings were publicly disclosed.

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 2, 2010

Ali Mohammad Eslampour, *Navaye Vaght*

Eslampour, an editor for the newspaper *Navaye Vaght* in Kermanshah province and the author of a blog, was charged with “creating public anxiety” and other antistate charges. No charges or trial proceedings had been disclosed by late year, but *Navaye Vaght* was supportive of Mir-Hossein Mousavi during his unsuccessful 2009 presidential bid.

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 9, 2010

Ali Malihi, *Etemad*, *Irاندokht*, *Shahrvand-e-Emruz*, and *Mehrnameh*

Malihi, a contributor to several publications and a council member of the Iranian Students Association, was charged with several anti-state counts, including “mutiny against the regime” and “insulting the president.” Malihi was sentenced to a four-year prison term, which an appeals court upheld on September 27, according to the Committee of Human Rights Reporters.

Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz and others published a February petition signed by 250 civil society activists demanding Malihi’s release and stating that he is a nonpartisan journalist. In a March 14 letter to Tehran’s prosecutor, Malihi’s father said the journalist endured severe beatings at Evin Prison, according to *Advar News*.

Malihi contributed to several reformist and independent publications including *Etemad*, *Irاندokht*, *Shahrvand-e-Emruz*, and *Mehrnameh*.

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 25, 2010

Hengameh Shahidi, *Etemad-e-Melli*

Shahidi was charged with several antistate counts, including “propagating against the regime,” according to the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran.

In November 2009, a Revolutionary Court sentenced her to six years and three months in prison. She was released pending appeal. The verdict was upheld on February 24, 2010, and Shahidi was taken into custody the next day, according to the Committee of Human Rights Reporters.

Shahidi worked for Mehdi Karroubi's 2009 presidential campaign and has written about Iranian and international politics, human rights, and women's rights. She was known as a reformist journalist who had written many articles condemning the practice of stoning. Shahidi spent several days at Evin Prison's infirmary, according to an April 26 report on *Saham News*. Shahidi's lawyer, Mohammad Mostafae, told *Kalame* that he has requested a retrial.

A fellow prisoner severely beat Shahidi in May as prison authorities stood by, *Kalame* reported. The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran said in September that Shahidi's mother was concerned about the journalist's deteriorating health. Shahidi was briefly released on bail so she could get medical care, but she was taken back into custody in mid-November before her treatment was completed, news reports said.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 3, 2010

Abolfazl Abedini Nasr, *Bahar Ahvaz*

Abedini, who frequently wrote about labor issues, was arrested in Ahvaz and transferred to Evin Prison in Tehran, according to the website of Reporters and Human Rights Activists. He was held in solitary confinement and subjected to interrogation without access to a lawyer, according to an open letter from his mother that was published on several news websites. She said he was in poor physical and psychological health.

An Ahvaz court sentenced Abedini to 11 years in prison on anti-state charges, including having "contact with enemy states," the news website *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* reported in April. Abedini was not represented by a lawyer at trial. When Abedini appealed, a Khuzestan provincial appellate court would not allow his lawyer to present arguments, *Kalame* reported. The appeals court upheld the verdict.

In September, Human Rights House in Iran reported that Abedini had been beaten at Ahvaz Prison.

IMPRISONED: MAY 25, 2010

Akbar Azad, *Varligh* and *Parpagh*

Azad, a prominent journalist who wrote for *Varligh* and *Parpagh* monthly magazines, covered Azeri culture, language, and history, according to Reporters and Human Rights Activists. He was arrested at his home in Tehran and transferred to a Tabriz detention facility. No charges or trial proceedings had been disclosed by late year.

In September, a website devoted to Azad's plight said he and other Azeri inmates were in dire physical condition. The website said Azad had been beaten, had suffered the loss of numerous teeth, and had been in solitary confinement for several months.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 12, 2010

Abdolreza Tajik, freelance

Tajik, a political columnist who focused on human rights, was detained two separate times in the government's 2009 crackdown on dissidents and journalists. He was arrested a third time in June 2010 after being summoned to the Intelligence Ministry, the BBC Persian service reported. Tajik had contributed to reformist and independent publications including *Fath*, *Bonyan*, *Bahar*, and *Shargh*.

No charges or trial proceedings had been disclosed by late year. Tajik's sister, Parvin, told the BBC that the journalist had been abused in custody. In November, she was sentenced to 18 months in prison herself for speaking publicly about his treatment, the BBC Persian service reported.

IMPRISONED: JULY 27, 2010

Siamak Ghaderi, freelance

Ghaderi was arrested in connection with entries he posted on his blog, *IRNA-ye maa*, or "Our IRNA," a reference to the Islamic Republic's official news agency. In the entries, he wrote about street protests and other developments after the contested 2009 presidential election, according to the reformist news website *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz*.

Ghaderi was an editor and reporter for IRNA for 18 years until he was dismissed for writing about the 2009 election on his blog, *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* said. Pro-government news websites, among them *Rasekhoon* and *Haghighat News*, called him a "seditionist" who was arrested for "immoral" acts.

He was being held at Evin Prison, where he was under pressure to make a false confession, according to online reports. Ghaderi's blog was repeatedly blocked by authorities before he was detained, *Jonbesh-e-Rah-e-Sabz* reported. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 18, 2010

Navid Mohebbi, freelance

Intelligence agents arrested Mohebbi, an 18-year-old blogger from Amol in northern Iran, at his home and placed him in custody at Sari Prison, the reformist news website *Saham News* reported. He is the youngest person on CPJ's 2010 prison census.

Mohebbi wrote about social issues, particularly women's rights, on a personal blog. Among other topics, he covered the case of Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani, a woman convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning. He also wrote in support of the Change for Equality campaign, an effort to reform laws that discriminate against women.

On November 14, Mohebbi appeared in a Sari court to face charges of "acting against national security," "insulting the supreme leader," and "propagating against the regime," local and international media reported. Mohebbi had been questioned by security agents on several occasions beginning in 2008, the Committee of Human Rights Reporters said.

The government blocked access to his blog on at least three occasions prior to May 2010, Mohebbi wrote. Although he moved the blog to a new address, authorities appeared to have imposed a permanent block.

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 10, 2010

Two journalists working for *Bild am Sonntag*

Two journalists working for the German newspaper *Bild am Sonntag* were arrested after interviewing the son of a woman convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning, a case that had drawn worldwide attention. *Bild am Sonntag* said the journalists, an editor and a photographer, had traveled to Iran to report a story on the woman, Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani. Neither the paper nor the government disclosed the names of the journalists.

The two were initially accused of improperly entering the country on tourist visas. "The two people were not journalists—or they had no proof for it," state-run Press TV quoted judiciary spokesman Gholam Hossein Mohseni-Ejei as saying.

In November, authorities announced that the two journalists would be charged with espionage. "The espionage charge for the two German citizens who came to Iran to stage propaganda and spying has been approved," Malekajdar Sharifi, head of the judiciary in

Eastern Azerbaijan province, told the semi-official Fars News Agency. Espionage in Iran carries a possible death sentence.

Bild am Sonntag quoted Editor-in-Chief Walter Mayer as saying that “the Iranian authorities know perfectly well that they are journalists and nothing else.”

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 24, 2010

Mohammad Reza Moghiseh, *Bist-saleh ha*

Moghiseh, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Bist-saleh ha* and regular contributor to reformist news sites, was being held at Evin Prison, the BBC Persian service reported. Security forces raided his office and home at the time of his arrest, the reformist news website *Kalame* reported.

Moghiseh had been arrested in October 2009 and sentenced to six years in prison on undisclosed charges, the BBC Persian service reported. As they did with some other detainees, authorities freed Moghiseh on bail; he posted US\$500,000 bail in March 2010. The reason for his rearrest was unclear.

A board member of the now-defunct Association of Iranian Journalists, Moghiseh was among a number of journalists and opposition politicians who investigated prison abuses in the aftermath of the contested 2009 presidential election. He was a supporter of presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi.

IMPRISONED: NOVEMBER 3, 2010

Nazanin Khosravani, freelance

Khosravani was a political columnist for several now-banned reformist newspapers, including *Bahar*, *Doran-e Emrooz*, *Kargozaran*, and *Sarmayeh*. Security officers searched her home and confiscated her audio recorder, computer, and other personal items, according to the BBC Persian service. The reformist news website *Kalame* said four security agents searched Khosrovani’s home and threatened her family members.

Khosrovani called her family once and said she was in solitary confinement, *Kalame* reported. Authorities blocked family visits and ignored inquiries about her legal status and well-being. Khosrovani suffered from a heart condition for which she was under treatment. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

Iraq: 1

IMPRISONED: APRIL 14, 2010

Saad al-Aossi, *Al-Shahid*

Al-Aossi, editor-in-chief of the critical weekly *Al-Shahid*, was taken from his home in Baghdad by a “mixed force of police officers and soldiers,” his brother told local reporters. Local press freedom advocates and journalists said al-Aossi was being held at a facility administered by the Counter-Terrorism Force, a unit responsible for high-level security cases that reports directly to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Al-Aossi was detained six days after publishing an opinion piece that said al-Maliki was secretive in filling high-level government positions. The government would not disclose any information about al-Aossi, including his whereabouts and legal status. Al-Maliki did not respond to CPJ’s inquiries.

Al-Aossi had been targeted earlier in the year. In February, police searched his newspaper’s office and confiscated equipment, according to the Journalistic Freedoms Observatory, a local press freedom group. The raid effectively closed *Al-Shahid* in the two weeks before the March parliamentary elections.

Kazakhstan: 1

IMPRISONED: JANUARY 7, 2009

Ramazan Yesergepov, *Alma-Ata Info*

In January 2009, two months after Yesergepov published two internal memos from the KNB, the Kazakh security service, the agency arrested the ailing editor at an Almaty hospital and transported him to a detention facility in the southern city of Taraz.

The KNB memos, published in Yesergepov’s newspaper *Alma-Ata Info*, showed high-ranking agents conspiring to influence a prosecutor and a judge in a tax-evasion case; Yesergepov also wrote a commentary on the contents of the memo.

The KNB declared the memos classified and charged Yesergepov with “collecting state secrets.” Authorities tried him behind closed doors, denied him a defense lawyer of his choosing, and barred access to his own case file.

In August 2009, a Taraz City Court judge sentenced Yesergepov to three years in prison. Raushan Yesergepova, the journalist's wife, told CPJ that the state-appointed defense lawyer did not attend Yesergepov's final hearing. Subsequent appeals—which Yesergepov prepared himself—were denied, as were appeals for early release and transfer to a lower-security facility.

During a June fact-finding mission to Almaty, CPJ Europe and Central Asia Program Coordinator Nina Ognianova tried to visit Yesergepov in prison. Initially, Kazakh authorities approved the visit, but officials with the local penitentiary service revoked the approval the day Ognianova traveled to the prison colony in Taraz.

A CPJ delegation advocated on behalf of Yesergepov in an October meeting with Kazakh Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, chairman of the permanent council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In the meeting, at OSCE headquarters in Vienna, Ognianova and CPJ Senior Adviser Jean-Paul Marthoz detailed the violations of Yesergepov's rights to a fair trial and sought his release.

Kuwait: 1

IMPRISONED: NOVEMBER 22, 2010

Mohammed Abdulqader al-Jassem, freelance

A criminal court in Kuwait City sentenced al-Jassem to one year in prison on defamation charges stemming from an article published on his blog, *Al-Mizan*, which criticized Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah for allowing Iran to exert undue influence on Kuwait.

Al-Jassem continued to face 17 other charges in late year, including defamation, insulting the emir, and “instigating the overthrow of the regime,” his lawyer, Abdullah al-Ahmad, told CPJ.

Kyrgyzstan: 2

IMPRISONED: JUNE 14, 2010

Ulugbek Abdusalomov, *Diydor*

Authorities in the southern Jalal-Abad region arrested Abdusalomov, editor of the independent weekly *Diydor*, following interethnic

clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan. According to CPJ sources and press reports, men in camouflage-style uniforms, driving a black SUV without license plates, blocked Abdusalomov's car on a Jalal-Abad street. Subsequent press reports said he was being held by Jalal-Abad regional police.

On June 23, the press office of the central Kyrgyz government said in a statement that Abdusalomov was being held in connection with May 12-15 protests by ethnic Uzbeks in the city of Jalal-Abad. Uzbek residents rallied against the possible return to office of ousted president Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Overthrown in April following mass protests, Bakiyev had found temporary refuge in Jalal-Abad before ultimately fleeing to Belarus, according to local press reports. The May rallies sparked a violent retaliation by ethnic Kyrgyz residents, who largely supported Bakiyev.

In August, regional prosecutors indicted Abdusalomov on charges of organizing and participating in mass disorder and making calls for separatism in connection with the protests. A charge of inciting ethnic hatred stemmed from an article published in *Diydor* that quoted local residents complaining about inequities in southern Kyrgyzstan. The indictment came as the editor was in police custody at a regional hospital undergoing treatment for a heart condition, the independent regional news website *Ferghana* reported.

Official records cast doubt on the allegations. At the time of the protests, Abdusalomov was in Bishkek working on the text of the new Kyrgyz Constitution as a member of a government committee, official transcripts show. In September, CPJ urged President Roza Otunbayeva to intervene in the politicized prosecution.

The London-based Writers in Prison Committee said that while Abdusalomov was hospitalized in September he suffered a stroke that affected one side of his body and his speech. He was put under house arrest late that month. Trial proceedings, originally scheduled for September, were postponed because of Abdusalomov's health problems, local press reports said. Defense lawyer Bektursun Kalmanov told CPJ that Abdusalomov remained under house arrest in late year.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 15, 2010

Azimjon Askarov, freelance

Authorities in the southern Jalal-Abad region arrested Askarov, a contributor to the independent news website *Voice of Freedom* and director of the local human rights group *Vozdukh (Air)*, after a violent

confrontation between police and villagers in Bazar-Korgon. One police officer was killed in the conflict.

The episode took place amid deadly ethnic clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents, which engulfed all of southern Kyrgyzstan in June. The clashes left hundreds dead, and forced up to a half million people to flee their homes. According to press reports and CPJ sources, Askarov was reporting on violence, destruction, looting, and human rights abuses in Bazar-Korgon at the time.

Authorities initially charged Askarov, 60, with organizing violent riots, but two months later expanded his indictment to include complicity to murder of a police officer, possession of ammunition and extremist literature, and attempted kidnapping, the independent regional news website *Ferghana* reported. Askarov denied the charges, and said he had not been present at the scene.

Before his arrest, Askarov had reported allegations that regional police had abused detainees and had failed to take appropriate action in response to the ethnic clashes, according to press reports and CPJ sources.

Askarov, held by the same department whose officer was killed in Bazar-Korgon, was beaten by police while in custody, defense lawyer Nurbek Toktakunov told CPJ. Toktakunov said he was himself attacked by relatives of the deceased officer.

On September 15, Judge Nurgazy Alimbayev pronounced Askarov guilty on all charges and sentenced him to life in prison. Toktakunov said the prosecution had failed to produce any evidence or eyewitness testimony at trial that implicated Askarov.

Moldova (held by Transdniester authorities): 1

IMPRISONED: APRIL 7, 2010

Ernest Vardanian, *Puls*, Novy Region

Authorities with the unrecognized separatist Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR) held Vardanian incommunicado since his arrest on charges of espionage and treason. The PMR is commonly known as Transdniester.

Vardanian is a staff reporter for the Chisinau-based newspaper *Puls* and a freelance contributor to the Russian Internet news agency Novy Region. He also contributed reporting to Europa Libera—the

Moldova and Romania service of the U.S. government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty.

A group of armed agents from PMR's Ministry of State Security (MGB) arrested Vardanian at his home in Tiraspol and placed him in an agency detention facility, according to press reports and CPJ interviews. MGB agents searched the journalist's home, confiscating computers, audio- and video-recording equipment, reporter's notebooks, and the family's bank and credit cards. The MGB denied Vardanian access to a lawyer after his arrest, according to press reports.

Puls Editor-in-Chief Dmitry Kavruk told Deutsche Welle in April that the MGB in Tiraspol had been pressuring Vardanian to stop working for Chisinau media outlets. While living in Tiraspol, Vardanian had commuted daily to the Moldovan capital of Chisinau for work.

In May, PMR authorities released to regional television a video showing Vardanian pleading guilty to charges of spying for Moldovan authorities; he was also shown to say he was being treated well in custody. Immediately after the video was released, Vardanian's wife and colleagues sounded an alarm, telling reporters that Vardanian appeared to be acting unnaturally and under duress. Authorities disclosed no evidence in support of the charges.

The Transdniester region broke away from Moldova proper in 1990, declaring independence unilaterally. The self-proclaimed PMR is not recognized by the international community.

Russia: 1

IMPRISONED: MARCH 22, 2006

Boris Stomakhin, *Radikalnaya Politika*

Stomakhin, editor of the small-circulation monthly newspaper *Radikalnaya Politika* (Radical Politics), was imprisoned on charges of inciting ethnic hatred and making public calls to extremist activity. The Butyrsky District Court of Moscow sentenced him to five years behind bars in November 2006. The journalist, his family, and his defense team said his imprisonment was in retaliation for his sharp criticism of the Kremlin's policies in the southern republic of Chechnya.

In her ruling, Judge Lyubov Ishmuratova said Stomakhin's articles "approved Chechen terrorists' criminal actions aimed at the annihilation of the Russian people as an ethnic group." The ruling quoted him as

writing: “Let tens of new Chechen snipers take their positions in the mountain ridges and the city ruins and let hundreds, thousands of aggressors fall under righteous bullets! No mercy! Death to the Russian occupiers! ... The Chechens have the full moral right to bomb everything they want in Russia.”

Stomakhin, who had pleaded not guilty, said he was “tried for his views and not for any real crime. ... In the articles, I expressed my opinion, with which people were free to agree or disagree,” the news agency RIA-Novosti reported. He said an opinion was not a “call to action.”

Police arrested Stomakhin in March 2006, a day after he fell from the window of his fourth-floor Moscow apartment while trying to elude police, according to local press reports. He broke both his legs and suffered a back injury. After his conviction, Stomakhin was placed in a prison colony in the village of Burepolom, Nizhny Novgorod region.

In February 2008, the Tonshaevsky Regional Court denied an appeal for Stomakhin’s early release, the Moscow-based For Human Rights group told *Kavkazsky Uzel*. Representatives of the group met with him briefly and told the press they were concerned about the journalist’s health; the fall from the window in 2006 had left him with a permanent limp and spinal cord damage.

Two other appeals for early release, made in 2009, were also denied. In 2010, a website dedicated to Stomakhin’s defense described harsh conditions, including insufficient heating, in the Burepolom prison colony.

Saudi Arabia: 1

IMPRISONED: JULY 29, 2009

Raafat al-Ghanim, freelance

Security agents arrested al-Ghanim, 26, a Syrian blogger living in Saudi Arabia who wrote critically about social and political issues in both countries, according to the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information. He was held incommunicado for 50 days before being transferred to Al-Hair Prison, according to a website advocating for his release. No formal charges had been disclosed by late year.

Before his arrest, al-Ghanim had signed a petition calling for the release of two activists arrested after announcing their intention to attend a protest in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, according to

the human rights network. In March 2010, a group of Syrian human rights organizations issued a statement calling for his release. The government has refused to disclose details about his legal status.

Sudan: 3

IMPRISONED: MAY 16, 2010

Ashraf Abdelaziz, *Rai al-Shaab*

Tahir Abu Jawhara, *Rai al-Shaab*

Abu Zar Ali al-Amin, *Rai al-Shaab*

Deputy Editor Al-Amin and reporters Abu Jawhara and Abdelaziz were arrested when Sudanese security forces raided Rai al-Shaab's offices in Khartoum, confiscating documents and equipment, according to news reports. Authorities closed the newspaper, which was owned by the opposition Popular Congress Party.

The editor-in-chief, Yassin Omar al-Imam, told CPJ that the raid came shortly after the daily published an article claiming that Iran had constructed a weapons factory in Sudan intended to supply Islamist insurgents in Africa and the Middle East. The report has not been independently corroborated.

In July, a criminal court in Khartoum sentenced al-Amin to five years in prison, and Abdelaziz and Abu Jawhara to two years apiece, according to their lawyer, Abdelomneim Osman Idriss. He said the journalists had been convicted of "undermining the constitutional system" and "publishing false information." The three were being held in Kober Prison in Khartoum, a facility notorious for abusive treatment of inmates.

Syria: 2

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 17, 2007

Ali al-Abdallah, freelance

Al-Abdallah, a freelance journalist who regularly contributed to prominent Arabic-language newspapers outside Syria, was arrested in 2007 in connection with his political activism. A leader of the Damascus Declaration, a reform movement calling for democratic change in Syria, al-Abdallah was sentenced to 30 months in prison.

On June 17, 2010, his scheduled release date, a military prosecutor told al-Abdallah he would face new charges related to his prison writings, his son, Mohammad al-Abdallah, told CPJ. In September, a military judge charged al-Abdallah with harming relations with a foreign country, according to local human rights groups.

The charges stemmed from a piece al-Abdallah wrote and smuggled out of prison in August 2009, according to news reports. The article criticized Wilayat Al-Faqih, a religious form of government advocated by Iranian Shiite leaders. The Syrian government is sensitive to critical writing about Iran, a close regional ally.

IMPRISONED: DECEMBER 27, 2009

Tal al-Mallohi, freelance

Al-Mallohi, a journalistic blogger, was detained in December after being summoned by security officials, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Two days later, security agents searched her house and confiscated her computer, Reuters reported.

The private newspaper *Al-Watan*, citing an unnamed security source, said in October 2010 that al-Mallohi was suspected of spying for the United States. But no formal charges had been publicly disclosed by late year.

Al-Mallohi's blog was devoted to Palestinian rights and was critical of Israeli policies. It also discussed the frustrations of Arab citizens with their governments and what she perceived to be the stagnation of the Arab world. The last posted entry was dated September 2009; it was not clear whether any subsequent posts could have been deleted.

The National Organization for Human Rights in Syria reported that al-Mallohi was arraigned before a state security court in Damascus on November 10. She was being held in solitary confinement in a Duma prison. Al-Mallohi's case has gained widespread attention in the Arab blogosphere, on social networks, and among international human rights activists.

Tunisia: 1

IMPRISONED: JULY 12, 2010

Fahem Boukadous, Al-Hiwar al-Tunisi

Boukadous was arrested after an appeals court in Tunisia upheld a

criminal conviction and prison sentence handed down in connection with his coverage of 2008 labor protests in the Gafsa mining region.

A correspondent for the Italy-based satellite television broadcaster Al-Hiwar al-Tunisi, Boukadous had been sentenced to a four-year prison term on charges of “belonging to a criminal association” and spreading materials “likely to harm public order.”

Boukadous was taken into custody a day after he left a hospital in the city of Sousse, where he was being treated for acute asthma. Colleagues and family said they were very concerned about Boukadous’ health. In October, Boukadous waged a hunger strike to protest his detention at Gafsa Prison.

Turkey: 4

IMPRISONED: JANUARY 30, 2009

Vedat Kurşun, *Azadiya Welat*

Kurşun, former editor-in-chief of the Kurdish daily *Azadiya Welat*, was arrested at Istanbul’s Ataturk Airport, according to Bia, a Turkish press freedom group. He was charged under the country’s Anti-Terror Law with spreading the propaganda of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, in the paper’s coverage during 2007 and 2008.

On May 13, Kurşun was sentenced to 166 years and six months in prison on 103 counts of spreading “propaganda on behalf of the terrorist organization” and “committing crimes on behalf of the organization,” according to Dogan News Agency. The Journalists Association of Turkey announced in July that it had awarded a 2010 Press Freedom Award to Kurşun.

Azadiya Welat is the only Kurdish-language daily in Turkey.

IMPRISONED: JANUARY 5, 2010

Bedri Adanir, *Hawar* and Aram

Adanir, owner of the pro-Kurdish publishing house Aram and editor-in-chief of the daily *Hawar*, was sentenced to one year and three months in jail in April 2009, the state Anatolian Agency reported. Adanir was charged under the country’s Anti-Terror Law with spreading the propaganda of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

The charges stem from a book published by Aram and written by PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, titled *Kültür-Sanat Devrimi Üzerine* (On

the Revolution of Culture and Art), according to Bia, a Turkish press freedom group. Adanir was detained in the southeastern city of Sirnak as he was returning from Iraqi Kurdistan.

The charges, which could bring 50 years in jail, were pending in late year. He was being held in Diyarbakir Prison.

IMPRISONED: MARCH 2010

Gurbet Cakar, *Rengê Hevîya Jinê*

Cakar, editor-in-chief of the Kurdish women's magazine *Rengê Hevîya Jinê* (The Color of Women's Hope), was charged under the country's Anti-Terror Law with spreading the propaganda of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

Prosecutors sought a 20-year prison term on the charges, which were pending in late year. She was being held in Diyarbakir Prison.

IMPRISONED: JULY 22, 2010

Ozan Kilinc, *Azadiya Welat*

Kilinc, former editor-in-chief of the Kurdish daily *Azadiya Welat*, was charged under the country's Anti-Terror Law with spreading the propaganda of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

A Criminal Court in Diyarbakir sentenced the journalist to 21 years in prison, the BBC reported. *Yuksekov Haber*, a local news website, said Kilinc was being held at Diyarbakir Prison.

Uzbekistan: 6

IMPRISONED: MARCH 15, 1999

Muhammad Bekjanov, *Erk*

Yusuf Ruzimuradov, *Erk*

Arrested and imprisoned in 1999, Bekjanov, editor of the opposition newspaper *Erk*, and Ruzimuradov, a reporter for the paper, continued to serve lengthy prison terms in Uzbekistan. A court in the capital, Tashkent, handed Bekjanov a 14-year jail term, while Ruzimuradov was given a 15-year sentence on charges of publishing and distributing a banned newspaper that criticized President Islam Karimov. The two journalists were also convicted of participating in a banned political protest and attempting to overthrow the regime.

According to CPJ sources and news reports, both men were tortured before their trial started. After the verdict was announced in November 1999, both were jailed in strict-security penal colonies for individuals sentenced for committing serious crimes. Bekjanov was imprisoned in the city of Navoi, and Ruzimuradov in a village near the city of Karshi. Immediately after the journalists' arrest, their families fled to the United States, Erk Party Secretary-General Aranazar Arifov told CPJ at the time.

In a 2003 interview he gave from a prison hospital where he was treated for tuberculosis he contracted in prison, Bekjanov described being beaten and tortured in custody. According to The Associated Press and the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), Bekjanov suffered a broken leg and hearing loss as a result.

After visiting her husband in prison in 2006, Nina Bekjanova told the independent news website *Uznews* the journalist had been subjected to beatings that caused him to lose most of his teeth. In 2007, Bekjanov was transferred to prison in the southwestern city of Kasan, according to the independent news website *Uznews*.

Exiled Uzbek journalists, local human rights workers, and other CPJ sources in the region said they had unsuccessfully tried to obtain any updated information about the whereabouts and well-being of Ruzimuradov. Uzbekistan's Embassy in Washington did not respond to CPJ's written request in November seeking information on the health, legal status, and whereabouts of the two journalists.

IMPRISONED: JULY 24, 2002

Gayrat Mehliboyev, freelance

A contributor to the state-owned weekly *Hurriyat*, Mehliboyev was arrested while covering a rally in Tashkent in support of the banned Islamist organization Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation).

After he spent six months in detention, a Tashkent court convicted Mehliboyev of anti-constitutional activities, participating in extremist religious organizations, and inciting religious hatred, and sentenced him to seven years in prison. To support the charges, prosecutors presented the court with political commentary the journalist had written in the spring 2001 edition of *Hurriyat*. In the commentary, Mehliboyev argued that Uzbek authorities should give preference to religious rule over Western-style democracy. Prosecutors insisted his arguments contained ideas of the banned Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Although Mehliboyev said repeatedly during the trial that he had been

beaten in prison, the court ignored his statements, a Tashkent-based representative of Human Rights Watch told CPJ at the time.

On February 18, 2003, a district court in Tashkent sentenced Mehliboyev to seven years in prison on charges of anti-constitutional activities, participating in extremist religious organizations, and inciting religious hatred, according to local and international news reports. An appeals court later cut his term by six months.

While in custody, Mehliboyev was sentenced to yet another prison term. In September 2006, the Tashkent regional court sentenced him to six additional years on extremism charges, the independent news website *Uznews* reported. Prison authorities claimed the journalist advocated Hizb ut-Tahrir ideas to other inmates and kept religious writings in his cell. Mehliboyev denied the accusations; he said he had kept only private notes in which he criticized the conditions of his imprisonment and described torture he said he was subjected to.

According to the Tashkent-based human rights group Ezgulik, Mehliboyev is serving his term in a penal colony in the central city of Zarafshan.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 12, 2006

Dzhamshid Karimov, freelance

Authorities in the central Jizzakh region forced Karimov, a freelance journalist and nephew of President Islam Karimov, into a psychiatric facility in the city of Samarkand. The Uzbek government refused to provide access to Karimov or release information that would allow independent experts to verify the reasons for his involuntary confinement, according to international rights groups. CPJ research shows authorities did not disclose a court order or medical diagnosis that had led to the journalist's forced hospitalization.

Karimov contributed to the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting and a number of independent newspapers and regional online publications. He often criticized the social and economic policies of local and national authorities.

Before the detention, regional authorities had followed Karimov and closely monitored his journalism, according to local news reports. A month before his arrest, police confiscated his passport after he submitted the document seeking an exit visa to attend a journalism seminar in neighboring Kyrgyzstan.

IMPRISONED: JUNE 7, 2008

Salidzhon Abdurakhmanov, *Uznews*

Abdurakhmanov, 60, was being held at a penal colony outside the southern city of Karshi, where he was transferred in October 2008 after a politicized prosecution on trumped-up charges of drug possession.

Based in the western city of Nukus, in Uzbekistan's Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic, Abdurakhmanov covered human rights, and social and economic issues for the independent news website *Uznews*. Among the topics he covered was corruption in local law enforcement agencies, including traffic police. He had contributed to the U.S. government-funded broadcasters Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and Voice of America, along with the London-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting, before the government imposed restrictions on independent reporting after the Andijan massacre of 2005.

Abdurakhmanov was detained on charges of drug possession with intent to use after regional traffic officers stopped his car for a check and claimed they had found four ounces (114 grams) of marijuana and less than a quarter ounce (about five grams) of opium in his trunk, *Uznews* reported. The journalist denied possessing the drugs and said police had planted them.

The journalist's prosecution was marred with procedural violations, CPJ research shows. Investigators interrogated Abdurakhmanov about his journalism and the publications to which he contributed—not about the origins of narcotics they had allegedly found. They also searched his home and confiscated his personal computer, sources told CPJ. After the journalist's initial blood tests revealed no traces of narcotics, authorities refused to free him and instead changed the charge to drug possession with intent to distribute, *Uznews* reported.

Authorities failed to establish a proper chain of custody for the seized drugs and prosecutors failed to present fingerprints collected from the seized narcotics containers, Abdurakhmanov's lawyer, Rustam Tulyaganov, told CPJ. But a court in Nukus convicted Abdurakhmanov in October 2008, and sentenced him to 10 years in prison a month later. Appeals in the case were denied.

IMPRISONED: FEBRUARY 22, 2009

Dilmurod Saiid, freelance

Regional authorities arrested Saiid in Tashkent and placed him in detention in the city of Samarkand after a local woman told prosecutors

that the journalist had ordered her to extort US\$10,000 from a local businessman, according to press reports and CPJ sources. Although the woman later withdrew her accusation, saying she was forced to make it, authorities did not release Saiid.

In March 2009, prosecutors announced that new witnesses had come forward to accuse Saiid of extortion, the independent news website *Ferghana* reported. Prosecutors also added a forgery charge based on purported statements from local farmers who alleged that Saiid had used their signatures to create fraudulent court papers. According to *Ferghana*, the farmers announced at Saiid's trial that prosecutors had forced them to testify against the journalist.

Authorities failed to notify Saiid's lawyer, Ruhiddin Komilov, of court hearing dates, Komilov told CPJ. In July 2009, a Tailak District Court judge sentenced the journalist in a closed proceeding without his defense lawyer, family, or the press in attendance. According to press reports and CPJ sources, Saiid was convicted on all charges, handed a 12-and-a-half-year prison term, and transferred to a strict-security penal colony outside the city of Navoi in central Uzbekistan. The prison is known for holding many political prisoners.

Before his imprisonment, Saiid had reported on official abuses against farmers for the independent regional news website *Voice of Freedom* as well as for a number of local newspapers. A member of the Tashkent-based human rights group Ezgulik, Saiid had also helped local farmers defend their rights in regional courts, local sources told CPJ.

In November 2009, the journalist's wife and 6-year-old daughter were killed in a car accident while on their way to visit him in prison, *Ferghana* reported. Ezgulik appealed for Saiid's release on humanitarian grounds, but the appeal was denied. In August, Uzbekistan's Supreme Court denied Saiid's appeal.

Vietnam: 5

IMPRISONED: APRIL 19, 2008

Nguyen Van Hai (Nguyen Hoang Hai), freelance

Hai was arrested and held without charge for five months, according to news reports. A closed court convicted him of tax evasion on September 10, 2008.

Hai, who also goes by the name Nguyen Hoang Hai, was an

outspoken commentator on his political blog *Dieu Cay* (The Peasant's Pipe). He was sentenced to two and a half years in prison for failing to pay 10 years of taxes on the part of a building he had rented to an optical shop. International news reports quoted his lawyer as saying the taxes should have been paid by the tenant, according to the rental agreement.

Several of Hai's blog entries had touched on politically sensitive issues. He had reported on national protests against China, which disputes Vietnam's claim to sovereignty over the nearby Spratly and Paracel islands. He also called for demonstrations against the Beijing Olympic torch relay, which was to pass through Ho Chi Minh City, according to the website of Viet Tan, an exiled pro-democracy organization.

In April 2009, Hai was transferred to the southern Cai Tau Prison, several hours from his home in Ho Chi Minh City, and was denied family visits, according to Viet Tan and international human rights groups. He was scheduled for release after serving his sentence on October 20, 2010, but authorities continued to detain him for undisclosed reasons.

IMPRISONED: SEPTEMBER 2008

Pham Thanh Nghien, freelance

A Haiphong city court sentenced online writer Pham Thanh Nghien in January 2010 to four years in prison and three years of house arrest on charges of spreading antistate material.

She was first arrested in September 2008 during a government crackdown on dissidents and was originally charged with staging a protest against the government's policy in a maritime dispute involving China.

In its ruling, the court singled out an online article written for foreign media in which Nghien criticized public officials for siphoning off compensation funds intended for survivors of fishermen killed by Chinese maritime patrols in 2007, according to international news reports.

Nghien was also accused of criticizing the government in interviews with foreign media outlets. Her half-day trial was closed to foreign media and diplomats, news reports said. She was being held at Thanh Liet Detention Center in Hanoi.

IMPRISONED: AUGUST 13, 2010

Pham Minh Hoang (Phan Kien Quoc), freelance

Pham Minh Hoang, a university mathematics professor and political

blogger associated with the exiled Viet Tan pro-democracy party, was arrested in Ho Chi Minh City.

At a September press conference, authorities announced that Hoang had been charged under Article 79 of the penal code for activities aimed at overthrowing the government. Subversion charges carry a potential death penalty in Vietnam.

The charges refer to 29 blog posts written under the penname Phan Kien Quoc, according to Viet Tan. The entries focused on corruption, environmental degradation, and perceived government failures to protect the country's territorial sovereignty from Chinese intervention, according to Viet Tan.

Hoang, a French national of Vietnamese origin, was detained at the Ministry of Public Security's Detainment Center in Saigon District 1. He awaited trial in late year.

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 18, 2010

Phan Thanh Hai (Anh Ba Saigon), freelance

Phan Thanh Hai, a political blogger who wrote under the penname Anh Ba Saigon, was taken into custody on a provisional four-month detention while authorities conducted further investigation.

Police raided his Ho Chi Minh City home, seizing computers, documents, and articles downloaded from the Internet, Agence France-Presse reported. According to his wife, Nguyen Thi Lien, police said they had evidence that he had written and published "false information" on his blog.

Hai's blog often touched on issues considered sensitive by the Vietnamese authorities, including a scandal at state-run shipbuilder Vinashin, maritime and territorial disputes with China, and a controversial Chinese-supported bauxite mining project in the country's Central Highlands.

He was being held at Ho Chi Minh City's Phan Dang Luu Detention Center.

IMPRISONED: OCTOBER 23, 2010

Le Nguyen Huong Tra (Do Long Girl), freelance

Le Nguyen Huong Tra, a blogger who wrote under the penname Do Long Girl, was taken into custody at her Ho Chi Minh City home. Her blog, which mixed humor and political analysis, had developed a significant following.

Tra's arrest stemmed from blog entries critical of Deputy Public Security Minister Nguyen Khanh Toan, whom she alleged had done favors for women who had had romantic relations with his son, according to news reports. The nature of those favors was not specified, and authorities would not discuss specifics of the case.

She faced criminal defamation charges that carried a maximum seven-year prison sentence. Charges were pending in late year.

Yemen: 1

IMPRISONED: AUGUST 16, 2010

Abdulelah Hider Shaea, freelance

Shaea, a frequent commentator on Al-Jazeera, was known for his coverage and analysis of extremist groups, including Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. He was detained after armed security forces raided his home in Sana'a, confiscating his computer and notes, his brother told *Al-Masdar*, an independent weekly.

Shaea's coverage was critical of government policies in fighting terrorist threats in Yemen. In July, security agents interrogated Shaea for several hours about his reporting. "The interrogators told me to stop talking to media about the government's campaign against Al-Qaeda. They told me it was for my own good. When I told them that I wouldn't be dissuaded from doing my job, they reminded me that they could disappear me at any time of their choosing," Shaea told CPJ at the time.

Arrested in August, Shaea was held incommunicado for 29 days before authorities presented him before a judge. He was accused of "planning to carry out terrorist acts," "providing media support to Al-Qaeda leadership," and "belonging to a terrorist organization." During the first two months in custody, he was allowed to see his lawyer only twice, according to the local human rights group Hood. Reporters and lawyers who attended Shaea's first hearing in September said extensive bruising on his body indicated he had been subjected to abusive treatment in custody.

CPJ International Press Freedom Awards

Since 1991, CPJ has honored journalists from around the world with its Annual International Press Freedom Awards. Recipients have shown extraordinary courage in the face of great risks, standing up to tyrants and documenting events in dark corners of the world. Here are the 2010 awardees:

Mohammad Davari, Iran

Davari, 36, editor-in-chief of the news website *Saham News*, exposed horrific abuse at the Kahrizak Detention Center, videotaping statements from detainees who said they had been raped, abused, and tortured.

The center was closed in July 2009 amid public uproar, but by September of that year the coverage had landed Davari in Evin Prison. He is serving a five-year prison term for “mutiny against the regime.”

His mother has written to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to say that her son has himself been tortured in custody. In solitary confinement, Davari was not allowed contact with his family for many months.

The journalist had served his country and paid a high price. As a young student, Davari volunteered to fight in the Iran-Iraq War, during which he suffered eye and leg injuries.



GETTY IMAGES

Nadira Isayeva, Russia

Isayeva, 31, has incurred the wrath of security services in Russia's volatile North Caucasus for her relentless reporting on their handling of violence and militant Islam in the region. As editor-in-chief of the independent weekly *Chernovik* (Rough Draft) in the southern republic of Dagestan, she has criticized as counterproductive the heavy-handed tactics of state agencies charged with fighting terrorism.

In 2008, authorities brought a criminal case against her under anti-extremist legislation after she published an interview with a former guerrilla leader who accused local authorities of corruption and of being in thrall to the Kremlin. Isayeva sees the case as retaliation for *Chernovik's* work. If convicted, she faces up to eight years in prison.

She and the newspaper are regularly harassed with official summonses, financial audits, and state-commissioned "linguistic analyses" that label content as extremist. Investigators have searched Isayeva's home, seizing a computer, books, and files. A local prosecutor has sent her notice that she must undergo a psychological examination. Since June 2009, the main state media regulator has been trying to close the paper for "hostile attitudes toward law enforcement officers and other extremist statements."



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Dawit Kebede, Ethiopia

Kebede, 30, was one of the first journalists to be jailed for independent reporting on Ethiopia's 2005 election violence, and he was among the last to be released under a presidential pardon nearly two years later. Unlike many of his colleagues who went into exile, Kebede chose to stay in Ethiopia after he walked free from Addis Ababa's Kality Prison, where he had been crammed into a communal cell with 350 political prisoners.

The government rebuffed his attempts to get a publishing license after his release, but relented in the face of public pressure. Kebede launched the *Awramba Times* in 2008, and today it is the country's only Amharic-language newspaper that dares to question authorities.



CPJ

“Here are three things people should know about me,” Kebede said. “First, it is impossible for me to live without the life I have as a journalist. Second, unless it becomes a question of life and death, I will never be leaving Ethiopia. Third, I am not an oppositionist. As a journalist, whatsoever would be a governing regime in Ethiopia, I will never hesitate from writing issues criticizing it for the betterment of the nation.”

Laureano Márquez, Venezuela

If there were an Algonquin Round Table in Caracas, Laureano Márquez, 47, would have a seat. Journalist, author, actor, and humorist, Márquez has found rich fodder in Venezuela’s idiosyncratic political landscape.

He is the scourge of left-wing President Hugo Chávez and other politicians for his biting columns in the Caracas-based daily *Tal Cual* and other national publications. He is also the author of three books of humor, including the national 2004 bestseller, *Código Bochinche*.

In February 2007, Márquez and *Tal Cual* were fined after a court ruled that a satirical “letter” to Chávez’s daughter “violated the honor, reputation, and private life” of the girl, then 9. In the piece, “Dear Rosinés,” Márquez urged the girl to influence her father to be nicer to his political opponents. In January, he wrote a piece in *Tal Cual* that imagined a Venezuela freed from the political oppression of a ruler named “Esteban,” a veiled reference to Chávez. Information Minister Blanca Eekhout demanded the journalist be criminally prosecuted, describing the column as an assault on the country’s democracy and a coup plot disguised as humor.



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International Press Freedom Award

Recipients 1991-2009

1991

Byron Barrera, *La Época*, Guatemala
Bill Foley and Cary Vaughan, United States
Tatyana Mitkova, TSN, former Soviet Union
Pius Njawe, *Le Messenger*, Cameroon

IMPRISONED:

Wang Juntao and Chen Ziming, *Economics Weekly*, China

1992

Muhammad al-Saqr, *Al-Qabas*, Kuwait
Sony Esteus, Radio Tropic FM, Haiti
David Kaplan, ABC News, United States
Gwendolyn Lister, *The Namibian*, Namibia
Thepchai Yong, *The Nation*, Thailand

1993

Omar Belhouchet, *El Watan*, Algeria
Nosa Igiebor, *Tell*, Nigeria
Veran Matic, Radio B92, Yugoslavia
Ricardo Uceda, *Sí*, Peru

IMPRISONED:

Doan Viet Hoat, *Freedom Forum*, Vietnam

1994

Iqbal Athas, *The Sunday Leader*, Sri Lanka
Daisy Li Yuet-wah, Hong Kong Journalists Association, Hong Kong
Aziz Nesin, *Aydinlik*, Turkey
In memory of staff journalists, *Navidi Vakhsh*, Tajikistan

IMPRISONED:

Yndamiro Restano, freelance, Cuba

1995

Veronica Guerin, *Sunday Independent*, Ireland
Yevgeny Kiselyov, NTV, Russia
Fred M'membe, *The Post*, Zambia
José Rubén Zamora Marroquín, *Siglo Veintiuno*, Guatemala

IMPRISONED:

Ahmad Taufik, Alliance of Independent Journalists, Indonesia

1996

J. Jesús Blancornelas, *Zeta*, Mexico

Yusuf Jameel, *Asian Age*, India

Daoud Kuttab, Internews Middle East, Palestinian Authority Territories

IMPRISONED:

Ocak Isik Yurtcu, *Ozgur Gundem*, Turkey

1997

Ying Chan, *Yazhou Zhoukan*, United States

Shieh Chung-liang, *Yazhou Zhoukan*, Taiwan

Victor Ivancic, *Feral Tribune*, Croatia

Yelena Masyuk, NTV, Russia

Freedom Neruda, *La Voie*, Ivory Coast

IMPRISONED:

Christine Anyanwu, *The Sunday Magazine*, Nigeria

1998

Grémah Boucar, Radio Anfani, Niger

Gustavo Gorriti, *La Prensa*, Panama

Goenawan Mohamad, *Tempo*, Indonesia

Pavel Sheremet, ORT, *Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta*, Belarus

IMPRISONED:

Ruth Simon, Agence France-Presse, Eritrea

1999

María Cristina Caballero, *Semana*, Colombia

Baton Haxhiu, *Koha Ditore*, Kosovo

Jugnu Mohsin and Najam Sethi, *The Friday Times*, Pakistan

IMPRISONED:

Jesús Joel Díaz Hernández, Cooperativa Avileña de Periodistas
Independientes, Cuba

2000

Steven Gan, *Malaysiakini*, Malaysia

Zeljko Kopanja, *Nezavine Novine*, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Modeste Mutinga, *Le Potentiel*, Democratic Republic of Congo

IMPRISONED:

Mashallah Shamsolvaezin, *Asr-e-Azadegan* and *Neshat*, Iran

2001

Mazen Dana, Reuters, West Bank

Geoff Nyarota, *The Daily News*, Zimbabwe

Horacio Verbitsky, freelance, Argentina

IMPRISONED:

Jiang Weiping, *Qianshao*, China

2002

Ignacio Gómez, “Noticias Uno,” Colombia

Irina Petrushova, *Respublika*, Kazakhstan

Tipu Sultan, freelance, Bangladesh

IMPRISONED:

Fesshaye Yohannes, *Setit*, Eritrea

2003

Abdul Samay Hamed, Afghanistan

Aboubakr Jamaï, *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* and *Assahifa al-Ousbouiya*,
Morocco

Musa Muradov, *Groznensky Rabochy*, Russia

IMPRISONED:

Manuel Vázquez Portal, Grupo de Trabajo Decoro, Cuba

2004

Alexis Sinduhije, Radio Publique Africaine, Burundi

Svetlana Kalinkina, *Belorusskaya Delovaya Gazeta*, Belarus

In memory of Paul Klebnikov, *Forbes Russia*, Russia

IMPRISONED:

Aung Pwint and Thaug Tun, freelance, Burma

2005

Galima Bukharbaeva, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Uzbekistan

Beatrice Mtetwa, media and human rights lawyer, Zimbabwe

Lúcio Flávio Pinto, *Jornal Pessoal*, Brazil

IMPRISONED:

Shi Tao, freelance, China

2006

Jamal Amer, *Al-Wasat*, Yemen

In memory of Atwar Bahjat, Al-Arabiya, Iraq

Madi Ceesay, *The Independent*, Gambia

Jesús Abad Colorado, freelance, Colombia

2007

Mazhar Abbas, ARY One World Television, Pakistan

Gao Qinrong, China

Dmitry Muratov, *Novaya Gazeta*, Russia

Adela Navarro Bello, *Zeta*, Mexico

2008

Bilal Hussein, *The Associated Press*, Iraq

Danish Karokhel and Farida Nekzad, *Pajhwok Afghan News*, Afghanistan

Andrew Mwenda, *The Independent*, Uganda

IMPRISONED:

Héctor Maseda Gutiérrez, *Grupo de Trabajo Decoro*, Cuba

2009

Mustafa Haji Abdinur, *Radio Simba* and *Agence France-Presse*, Somalia

Naziha Réjiba, *Kalima*, Tunisia

IMPRISONED:

Eynulla Fatullayev, *Realny Azerbaijan*, Azerbaijan

J.S. Tissainayagam, *OutreachSL* and the *Sunday Times*, Sri Lanka

CPJ Burton Benjamin Memorial Award

Since 1991, CPJ has given the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award to an individual in recognition of a lifetime of distinguished achievement in service of press freedom. The award honors Burton Benjamin, the CBS News senior producer and former CPJ chairman who died in 1988. In 2010, CPJ honored Aryeh Neier.

Aryeh Neier, United States

A pillar of the U.S. and international human rights community, Neier spent 15 years with the American Civil Liberties Union, including eight as national director. In 1978, he helped found Human Rights Watch, leading the organization as executive director for a dozen years before joining the Open Society Institute as president.

In 1981, when a small group of U.S. journalists wanted to help colleagues overseas who were in trouble, Neier provided invaluable advice about starting a non-profit group. That organization became CPJ, and Neier served on its board for many years.

Neier writes frequently for *The New York Review of Books*, and has been published in numerous periodicals, including *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *Foreign Policy*. For 12 years he wrote a column on human rights for *The Nation*.

“Aryeh Neier is a true pioneer in the field of press freedom and human rights,” CPJ Chairman Paul Steiger said. “Through his groundbreaking work at Human Rights Watch, his leadership of the Open Society Institute, and his journalism, he has advanced press freedom and helped countless individual journalists and writers around the world.”



OSI

Burton Benjamin Memorial Award Recipients 1991-2009

1991

Walter Cronkite
CBS News

1992

Katharine Graham
The Washington Post Company

1993

Ted Turner
CNN

1994

George Soros
Open Society Institute

1995

Benjamin C. Bradlee
The Washington Post

1996

Arthur Ochs Sulzberger
The New York Times

1997

Ted Koppel
ABC News

1998

Brian Lamb
C-SPAN

1999

Don Hewitt
CBS News

2000

Otis Chandler
Times Mirror Company

2001

Joseph Lelyveld
The New York Times

2002

Daniel Pearl
The Wall Street Journal

2003

John F. Burns
The New York Times

2004

John S. Carroll
Los Angeles Times

2005

Peter Jennings
ABC News

2006

Hodding Carter III

2007

Tom Brokaw
NBC News

2008

Beatrice Mtetwa

2009

Anthony Lewis

CPJ at a Glance

How did CPJ get started?

A group of U.S. foreign correspondents created CPJ in response to the often brutal treatment of their local colleagues by authoritarian governments and other enemies of independent journalism.

Who runs CPJ?

CPJ has a staff of 23 at its New York headquarters, including area specialists for each major world region. CPJ has a San Francisco-based Internet advocacy coordinator, representatives in Washington and Europe, and consultants stationed around the world. A board of prominent journalists directs CPJ's activities.

How is CPJ funded?

CPJ is funded solely by contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations. CPJ does not accept government funding.

Why is press freedom important?

Without a free press, few other human rights are attainable. A strong press freedom environment encourages the growth of a robust society, which leads to stable, sustainable democracies and healthy social, political, and economic development. CPJ works in more than 120 countries, many of which suffer under repressive regimes, debilitating civil war, or other problems that harm press freedom and democracy.

How does CPJ protect journalists?

By publicly revealing abuses against the press and by acting on behalf of

imprisoned and threatened journalists, CPJ effectively warns journalists and news organizations where attacks on press freedom are occurring. CPJ organizes vigorous public protests and works through diplomatic channels to effect change. CPJ issues news alerts, protest letters, and in-depth special reports; publishes press freedom commentary daily on the CPJ Blog; and produces *Attacks on the Press*, a comprehensive annual survey of international press freedom.

Where does CPJ get its information?

CPJ has full-time program coordinators monitoring the press in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Central Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa. It also has an Internet advocacy coordinator addressing threats to online expression. The coordinators track developments through their own independent research, fact-finding missions, and firsthand contacts in the field, including reports from other journalists. CPJ shares information on breaking cases with other press freedom organizations through the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, a global electronic network.

When would a journalist call upon CPJ?

In an emergency. Using local and foreign contacts, CPJ intervenes whenever local and foreign correspondents are in trouble. CPJ notifies news organizations, government officials, and human rights organizations immediately of press freedom violations.

When traveling on assignment. CPJ advises journalists covering dangerous assignments.

When covering the news. Attacks against the press are news, and they often serve as the first signal of a crackdown on all freedoms. CPJ is uniquely situated to provide journalists with information and insight into press conditions around the world.

How to Report an Attack on the Press

CPJ needs accurate, detailed information in order to document abuses of press freedom and help journalists in trouble. CPJ corroborates the information and takes appropriate action on behalf of the journalists and news organizations involved.

What to report:

Journalists who are:

- Arrested
- Assaulted
- Censored
- Denied credentials
- Harassed
- Kidnapped
- Killed
- Missing
- Threatened
- Wounded
- Wrongfully expelled
- Wrongfully sued for libel or defamation

News organizations that are:

- Attacked, raided, or illegally searched
- Censored
- Closed by force
- Subject to confiscation of editions or jamming of transmissions
- Subject to vandalism or destruction
- Wrongfully sued for libel or defamation

Contact information

Call collect if necessary.

Africa:

(212) 465-9344, x117

E-mail: africa@cpj.org

Twitter: [@africamedia_CPJ](https://twitter.com/@africamedia_CPJ)

Americas:

(212) 465-9344, x120 and x146

E-mail: americas@cpj.org

Facebook: [@cpjespanol](https://www.facebook.com/cpjespanol)

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E-mail: info@cpj.org

Twitter: [@pressfreedom](https://twitter.com/@pressfreedom)

Facebook: [@committeetoprotectjournalists](https://www.facebook.com/committeetoprotectjournalists)

What happens next

Depending on the case, CPJ will:

- Investigate and confirm the report, sending a fact-finding mission if necessary.
- Pressure authorities to respond.
- Notify human rights groups and press organizations around the world, including the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, Article 19, Amnesty International, Reporters Sans Frontières, PEN, International Federation of Journalists, and Human Rights Watch.
- Increase public awareness through the press.
- Publish advisories to warn other journalists about potential dangers.

CPJ Staff

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Spotlight on Giving

The Leon Levy Foundation Provides Critical Core Support

CPJ works closely with local journalists, foreign correspondents, media groups, and human rights organizations to ensure that journalists everywhere are free to carry out their reporting. CPJ investigates hundreds of cases each year involving journalists who have been censored, jailed, kidnapped, or killed for their work.

The generous and steadfast support of the Leon Levy Foundation has helped sustain CPJ's press freedom advocacy during a volatile period for the media worldwide.

Our work is making a difference. In 2010, CPJ advocacy helped win the early release of 46 unjustly imprisoned journalists. We also provided direct assistance to 182 journalists and their families—helping them pay for urgent medical treatment, fund legal defenses, and flee the threat of murder or imminent arrest.

CPJ achieved a major victory in 2010 by helping secure the release of journalists imprisoned in Cuba. In July 2010, Havana agreed to release 52 political prisoners as part of a deal negotiated by the Roman Catholic Church and Spanish diplomats. CPJ's sustained reporting along with targeted advocacy in Madrid ensured that jailed journalists were priority cases. Out of 21 journalists imprisoned at the start of the year, 17 had been released by late 2010.

The Leon Levy Foundation's multi-year commitment continues its partnership with CPJ, helping free journalists from unjust imprisonment, securing justice for those who have been killed for their reporting, and providing direct assistance to journalists in danger.

Contributors

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<i>The New Yorker</i>	UM/Interpublic Group
The Newhouse Foundation	Viacom
News Corporation	<i>The Wall Street Journal</i>
The Oak Foundation	The Washington Post Company
Open Society Institute	Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP
Nicholas B. Ottaway Foundation	Brian Williams
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Throughout Mexico, from the borderlands to the Sierra Madre, criminal gangs are using murder, abduction, and threats to censor the news. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, journalists are dying in greater numbers as they cover conflicts with vast international implications. And across the African continent, from Cameroon to South Africa, governments are employing new laws and repressive police tactics to silence coverage of official corruption.

Attacks on the Press analyzes conditions for the news media in more than 100 countries across the world, charting advancements and documenting new dangers. As Cuba frees jailed reporters and editors, Iran still holds dozens in its prisons. While online journalism blossoms in the Middle East and Asia, censorship is creeping back in Latin American countries.

The world's most comprehensive guide to international press freedom, *Attacks on the Press* is compiled annually by the Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent, nonprofit organization.

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