

World Press Freedom Day

The following journalists were murdered for carrying out their profession in 1998:

Angola (1)

Simaon Roberto, 5 June
Simaon Roberto, a journalist working for the *Journal de Angola* in Luanda, was shot dead when returning to his newspaper's offices after covering a meeting of government ministers. Even though Roberto's car was stolen, the motive of the attack remains unclear and suspicions persist that it was related to his work as a reporter.

Bangladesh (1)

Saiful Alam Mukul, 30 August
Saiful Alam Mukul, editor of the *Dainik Runner*, was killed by gunmen on the night of 30 August 1998 in the town of Jessore. According to local police, the journalist was returning to his home when gunmen opened fire, killing him instantly. *Dainik Runner* is well-known for criticising politicians and investigating corruption, and it is suspected that this is the reason for the murder.

Brazil (2)

Manuel Leal de Oliveira, 14 January
Manuel Leal de Oliveira, editor and publisher of *A Regiao*, was well known for his critical reporting of corruption in southern Bahia. He was shot dead on the evening of 14 January after reportedly being followed by a group of unidentified men.

José Carlos Mesquita, 10 March
TV Ouro Verde news anchor José Carlos Mesquita was killed by three unknown gunmen shortly after recording an edition of his

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show "Espaço Aberto". Although little evidence as to the motive of the murder has been found, many of his colleagues claim that Mesquita was killed because of his reporting, which frequently criticised local government and business leaders.

Burkina Faso (1)

Norbert Zongo, 13 December
Norbert Zongo, Chief Editor of the private weekly *L'Indépendant* and head of Burkina Faso's Private Press Editors' Company, was killed on a road outside the capital Ouagadougou. The bodies of the journalist, his brother, his chauffeur and one other person were found, the rear door was pierced by bullet holes. Mr Zongo, whose pen name was Henri Sebgo was known for his strong criticism of the government.

Canada (1)

Tara Singh Hayer, 18 November
Sikh-Canadian publisher Tara Singh Hayer was shot dead in the garage of his suburban Vancouver home on the evening of 18 November. Hayer, who published the *Indo-Canadian Times*, Canada's largest and oldest Punjabi weekly, was a critic of Sikh fundamentalists and had been left partially paralysed by an assassination attempt in 1988. The exact motives for the attack are unclear but it seems that he was the victim of Sikh fundamentalists whom he frequently criticised in his newspaper.

Colombia (6)

Oscar García Calderón, 22 February
Oscar García Calderón was shot to death in a Bogotá suburb shortly after leaving the offices of *El Espectador*, for which he was bullfighting correspondent. Although his wallet was taken by his killers, other valuables were not, indicating a motive other than theft. Several colleagues believe his murder was related to his investigation of Mafia links to bullfighting.

Nelson Carvajal Carvajal, 16 April
Nelson Carvajal Carvajal, a teacher and radio producer for local station Radio Sur in Pitalito, was murdered by gunmen as he left the school where he taught on 16 April. Carvajal's pro-



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grammes frequently exposed local government corruption, and it is feared that his murder was connected to his reporting activities.

Bernabé Cortés Valderrama, 19 May

Bernabé Cortés Valderrama, a television news reporter for Noticias CVN, was shot to death while travelling in a taxi in Cali on the morning of 19 May. The driver was also murdered. Cortés is thought to have been singled out for his reporting on drug trafficking and government corruption for his nightly news show.

Amparo Leonor Jiménez Pallares, 11 August
Jiménez was a television reporter for stations QAP and En Vivo until shortly before her death. She was dropping her son at school when she was shot three times in the head by a gunman who fled on a motorcycle. Investigators concluded that she was killed in retaliation for a story broadcast in 1996, in which she implicated a former politician in a terror campaign against peasants. A man has been charged with the murder.

Nelson Osorio Patiño, 27 August

Sports journalist Nelson Osorio Patiño was murdered by a gunman on the morning of 27 August in western Bogotá. The assassin shot him four times before fleeing with an accomplice on a motorbike. Osorio owned a sports newspaper and was a well-known sports reporter and producer. No motive was immediately established by police.

José Arturo Guapacha, 15 October

José Arturo Guapacha, director of the magazine *Panorama*, was shot dead in Tuluá, near Cali. Guapacha had been a broadcast and print journalist for 20 years when he was shot by a waiting gunman. The motive for the murder has not yet been confirmed, although it is feared it might be related to Guapacha's activities as a journalist.

Ethiopia (1)

Tesfaye Tadesse, 7 June

Tesfaye Tadesse, a lawyer, human rights activist and owner and editor of the newspaper *Lubar* and the magazine *Mestawet*, was hacked to death by two men armed with machetes outside his home in Addis Ababa. No arrests have been made and no motive established, but it is feared that Tadesse's murder was connected to his publishing activities.

Georgia (1)

Georgy Chanya, 26 May

Chanya, a correspondent for the daily *Resonants*,



was killed while covering fighting between Abkhaz rebels and Georgian guerrillas. He was following a band of guerrillas when their camp was attacked.

Mexico (4)

Luis Mario García Rodríguez, 12 February

Luis Mario García Rodríguez, a reporter for the daily newspaper *La Tarde* in Mexico City, was murdered by gunmen late at night in Colonia Guerrero. García had frequently exposed government corruption. Shortly before his death he had reported on links between state lawyers and drug traffickers, and had been interrogated by police over his sources of information.

Claudio Cortés García, 23 October

Claudio Cortés García, a journalist with the Mexican edition of French newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique*, was found dead in the back seat of a car in Mexico City on 23 October. He had disappeared on the night of 20 October. Preliminary investigations suggested that Mr Cortés, who also worked for the *Reforma* and *El Financiero* dailies and for *La Crisis* magazine, had been strangled. While no motive was immediately established, it is feared that the attack was related to Mr Cortés's activities as a journalist.

Fernando Martínez Ochoa, 25 October

Fernando Martínez Ochoa, a reporter and spokesman for Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (Sedesol) in Chihuahua, was found murdered in his car on 25 October in Ciudad Juárez. Few details of the attack are available but it is feared that the murder was related to his reporting activities.

Pedro Valle Hernández, 29 October

Television reporter Pedro Valle Hernández, 28, was shot to death in the Pacific coast city of Zihuatanejo on 29 October. Valle, correspondent for Guerrero state television and radio network, was shot in the back of his neck while sitting in his car. Police said robbery was an unlikely motive as no belongings were taken. His last report, broadcast posthumously, exposed a local child prostitution ring.

Nigeria (1)

Tunde Oladepo, 26 February

Five gunmen broke into the home of Tunde Oladepo, a senior correspondent with *The Guardian* newspaper in Ogun, on the morning of



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26 February and shot him to death in front of his family. Nothing was taken from his home, suggesting that something other than robbery was the motive for the attack.

Pakistan (1)

Lakhano Siyal, 18 October

Lakhano Siyal, a veteran journalist, was found murdered at home by unknown assailants on 18 October. Siyal was former Vice-President of the Hyderabad Press Club and ex-chief reporter for the dailies *Aftab* and *Ibrat*. Preliminary investigations showed he was attacked with a sharp-edged weapon after having been gagged with a piece of cloth. A condolence meeting of local journalists described the attack as "threat to freedom of speech and expression". Police have arrested 13 people on suspicion of murder.

Peru (2)

Isabel Chumpitaz Panta and José Amaya Jacinto, 6 April

Husband and wife Isabel Chumpitaz Panta and José Amaya Jacinto worked as producer and journalist respectively for Radio Satélite. The couple were murdered when a gang of armed men entered their home in La Unión at night. Chumpitaz's brother, Walter, who is also a producer for Radio Satélite, was stabbed and severely wounded in the attack, her mother was beaten and the gang attempted to rape her sister. Several men have been detained by police.

Philippines (1)

Rey Bancayrin, 30 March

Rey Bancayrin, a broadcaster for radio station DXLL in Zamboanga City, was murdered by gunmen while on air. Two men entered the studio and shot the outspoken journalist three times before escaping. It is thought that Bancayrin was murdered because of his reporting on local government corruption and drug trafficking.

Republic of Congo (1)

Fabien Fortune Bitoumbo, 29 August

On 29 August Fabien Fortune Bitoumbo, a journalist with the independent radio station Radio Liberté and former editor-in-chief of *La Rue Meurt*, was shot dead by members of a militia group. Mr Bitoumbo was reporting on a visit to the town of

Mindouli by a government minister when he was taken hostage and murdered.

Russia (2)

Larisa Yudina, 8 June

Larisa Yudina, editor of the independent newspaper *Sovietskaya Kalmykia Today*, was found dead in the suburbs of the Russian Republic of Kalmykia capital, Elista. She had suffered multiple stab wounds and a fractured skull. As editor of the only independent newspaper in the republic, Yudina had received many threats for her reporting of corruption and criticism of millionaire President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. Three suspects have so far been arrested.

Anatoly Levin-Utkin, 24 August

Anatoly Levin-Utkin, deputy editor-in-chief of *Yuridichesky Petersburg Segodnya*, was attacked by two men as he returned home in St Petersburg on 20 August and left unconscious. The journalist's briefcase, containing material for the next edition of the newspaper, and photographic equipment, were stolen. Levin-Utkin died from his injuries on 24 August. *Yuridichesky Petersburg Segodnya* had published a series of articles on corruption in the banking industry. Colleagues believed the journalist's death was directly related to this investigation.

Sierra Leone (1)

Edward Smith, 13 April

BBC reporter Edward Smith was killed when a convoy of African peace-keeping forces in which he was travelling was attacked by rebel soldiers in Kono. Smith had previously worked as a reporter for Sierra Leone's independent Vision newspaper and as editor of The Storm.

Thailand (1)

Sayomchai Vijitwittayapong, 10 January

Sayomchai Vijitwittayapong, a reporter for the newspaper *Matichon* in Phichit in central Thailand, was found shot dead in his car on 10 January, after reportedly agreeing to meet an unknown source. Vijitwittayapong was known to have been investigating land development corruption, and had reportedly rejected a bribe to halt his reporting.



10 Journalists Murdered since 1 January 1999

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The following journalists have been murdered for carrying out their profession in 1999:

India (1)

Shivani Bhatnagar, 23 January

Shivani Bhatnagar, a special correspondent for the English-language daily *The Indian Express*, was strangled and stabbed repeatedly at her Delhi apartment on 23 January. She had been alone at home with her three-month old son, who was left unharmed. There were no signs of forced entry. It is feared that her killers may have been attempting to recover incriminating documents.

Serbia (1)

Enver Maloku, 11 January

The head of the ethnic Albanian information centre in Kosovo, Enver Maloku, was shot and killed by unknown gunmen in Pristina on 11 January. It was the second assassination attempt on Mr Maloku, who narrowly escaped injury in July 1998. The Kosovo Information Centre is a supporter of a moderate political faction.

Sierra Leone (8)

Dominick Kabba Kargbo, January

Dominick Kabba Kargbo, deputy editor of the independent newspaper *Pathfinder*, disappeared near Freetown and is feared dead. After reporting on a rebel attack on the capital for the BBC in late December, he was taken into detention by police 'for his own protection'. It is suspected that he was later captured by rebels and executed.

James Ogogo, January

Nigerian journalist James Ogogo was reported missing during the rebel attack on Freetown. He has since been confirmed dead, although details of his murder are not known.

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Jenner Cole, 9 January

Jenner "J.C." Cole was abducted by Revolutionary United Front rebels from his home in central Freetown. While being taken to a rebel base in the east of the capital, Cole was shot in the head by his abductors, in front of his fiancée. He died immediately. Rebels prevented friends from removing Cole's body from the street.

Michael Charlie Hinga, 9 January

Journalist Michael Charlie Hinga, who worked for the state broadcaster SLBS, was abducted by Revolutionary United Front rebels from his home in Freetown. He is now missing, presumed dead.

Mohammed Kamara, 9 January

SKY-FM journalist Mohammed Kamara, who covered court proceedings of the 1998 treason trials, was shot dead by Revolutionary United Front rebels in central Freetown. It was reported that rebels entered Freetown with a 'hit-list' of journalists.

Paul Mansaray, 9 January

Paul Mansaray, deputy editor of the *Standard Times*, and his family were murdered by Revolutionary United Front rebels at their home in eastern Freetown. The rebels raided the house and abused Mansaray about his work as a journalist, before leaving the building, setting it on fire and shooting at those trapped inside. Mansaray, his wife, their two young children and a nephew died in the blaze.

Myles Tierney, 10 January

Myles Tierney, an American cameraman with the Associated Press, was shot and killed on 10 January in Freetown. He was travelling with other journalists in a convoy of African peace-keeping forces when they were attacked by a group of rebel soldiers.

Munir Turay, between 9 and 15 January

Munir Turay, a freelance journalist who had worked for *Punch*, the *Daily Mail*, and the SLBS radio station, was killed on an unspecified date between 9 January and 15 January. The exact circumstances of his death in Freetown are unknown, but colleagues reported that there were bullet holes in his back.

Sources: Committee to Protect Journalists (International Press Institute, Reporters Sans Frontières, Glasnost Defence Foundation, IFEX)



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