

Under Attack: Practicing Journalism in a Dangerous World

A Report to the Center for International Media Assistance

By Bill Ristow

December 22, 2009



The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), a project of the National Endowment for Democracy, aims to strengthen the support, raise the visibility, and improve the effectiveness of media assistance programs by providing information, building networks, conducting research, and highlighting the indispensable role independent media play in the creation and development of sustainable democracies around the world. An important aspect of CIMA's work is to research ways to attract additional U.S. private sector interest in and support for international media development.

CIMA convenes working groups, discussions, and panels on a variety of topics in the field of media development and assistance. The center also issues reports and recommendations based on working group discussions and other investigations. These reports aim to provide policymakers, as well as donors and practitioners, with ideas for bolstering the effectiveness of media assistance.

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Abbreviations for Organizations Mentioned in this Report

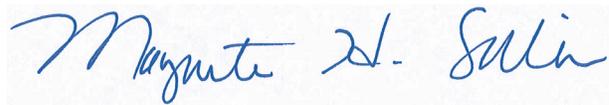
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
IAPA	Inter American Press Association
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IMS	International Media Support
INSI	International News Safety Institute
IPI	International Press Institute
IRE	Investigative Reporters and Editors
NUJP	National Union of Journalists of the Philippines
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RSF	Reporters Without Borders (commonly abbreviated based on its French title, <i>Reporters Sans Frontières</i>)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAN	World Association of Newspapers

Preface

The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA) at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) commissioned this report about the physical safety of journalists. The purpose of this study is to examine the key issues surrounding physical attacks on journalists and to consider the factors that create media environments that are hostile to journalists.

CIMA is grateful to Bill Ristow, a veteran journalist and international journalism trainer, for his research and insights on this topic. CIMA would also like to thank Theresa Morrow for her valuable assistance with Ristow's research.

We hope that this report will become an important reference for international media assistance efforts.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marguerite H. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

Marguerite H. Sullivan
Senior Director
Center for International Media Assistance

Executive Summary

Scores of journalists are killed every year around the world, many of them murdered for doing their jobs, and hundreds or even thousands of others face physical threats ranging from criminal beatings to kidnapping. Indeed, 30 journalists in the Philippines were killed in a single incident in late November of 2009, the worst such tragedy ever recorded.

“If you work in the press freedom area, the fact that the people you work for are murdered—that makes it the *most* serious issue,” said David Dudge, director of the International Press Institute (IPI) in Vienna, Austria.¹

Yet for all the exhaustive documentation, tough-sounding international resolutions, and earnest calls to action on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day every May, it is also a problem so far, at least, unsuccessfully in search of a lasting solution.

This report examines the key issues surrounding threats to the physical safety of journalists, particularly in countries with hostile media environments. While acknowledging the serious impact of repressive measures such as imprisonment, the focus of the report is sharply on incidents of violence.

Those threats come from many different directions: from drug cartels or rebel groups; from autocratic governments or ethnic enemies; from stray bullets or terrorist bombs. Indeed, it may be the widely disparate nature of the threats that makes a “one size fits all” solution so elusive. Half a dozen professional organizations are actively engaged in the problem, as are representatives of some of the world’s most important multilateral organizations, among them the United Nations and

the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

But there is not even agreement about the number of journalists who have been killed, much less about truly effective ways to reduce the violence.

Within the past few years, however, there have been

signs of a more coordinated approach both to analyzing the problems and finding solutions. Recognizing that the violence not only was not going to go away, but also was becoming more troubling in certain ways, a group of press freedom organizations came together in 2003 to create a new body with the sole purpose of improving the safety of journalists in dangerous situations. Since then, the International News Safety Institute (INSI) has helped put the topic of safety training and awareness in a prominent position for many large media companies,

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and it is working to spread the training to journalists in the world's hotspots. Meanwhile, a number of advocacy groups are focusing their attention on governments that may make statements supporting the principles of press freedom, but then fail to seriously investigate or prosecute individual incidents of criminal attacks against journalists—creating a “culture of impunity” that some argue could be more harmful than the violent acts themselves.

Yet even journalists' most passionate supporters agree that sometimes journalists bring the problem upon themselves. Biased, inaccurate, and incendiary reporting not only do a disservice to readers, they can also be a primary cause of reactive attacks on reporters.

Raising standards, the veteran editor Harold Evans has said, “is our principal defence in sustaining public support ... Every time a reporter anywhere slants the facts, writes a story to fit his preconception, allows the unclouded face of truth to suffer wrong, he betrays [the victims of deadly violence].”²²

If the problem of violence against journalists has so far proven intractable, enough strong research, analysis and advocacy has been done over the past two decades to provide a clear understanding of the challenges—and some potential answers. Drawing on the experience of press freedom experts, and especially on the insights of some of those on the front lines of violence, these are recommendations for action that could improve the hopes of true solutions:

Biased, inaccurate, and incendiary reporting not only do a disservice to readers, they can also be a primary cause of reactive attacks on reporters.

► **Get the facts, and get them as straight as possible.** There should be one centralized, consistent, and regularly updated tally of deaths of journalists, with subsidiary tallies of beatings and other attacks, acknowledging the difficulties of full counts in these cases. The different groups now doing such tallies individually should cooperate on the parameters for and oversight of this centralized count. Offering one universally accepted number will give the public—and especially, multilaterals and donor groups—far more confidence that they are seeing the true scope of the problem.

► **More targeted coordination of efforts by international organizations.** It is important to have a variety of groups approaching the problem from different angles. But certain aspects of this problem are so difficult and

will require so much muscle—in investigation, in lobbying, in brain power—that lasting solutions are unlikely without the critical mass of truly coordinated work. The leading press freedom groups should make it a priority to find a way to combine efforts in ways that will maximize their impact.

► **Create a pilot project of independent investigation.** One of the most effective ways to bring pressure on the “impunity countries” may be to publicize their failures in the international arena. Media

organizations have showed they can work together on safety standards. Perhaps they can also work together on coverage—for example, digging into some of the most egregious cases of impunity through independent investigative reporting. Such a pilot project could involve teams of local and experienced foreign investigative reporters, with a commitment to publish or broadcast results in high-profile ways, and would require funding from outside sources.

- ▶ **Toughening the policy approach.** Governments and multilaterals that provide aid to the developing world should strengthen their policies toward funding impunity governments. Withholding aid altogether is likely not the answer (although channeling it through third parties might be), because that approach generally hurts citizens more than governments, and

sanctions have their own issues. But policymakers, who should know the critical importance of a free press to democratization, should explore other avenues for using their aid leverage in support of reducing violence against journalists.

- ▶ **Broaden the approach to training, and fund it better.** INSI’s proposed five-year plan for expanding safety training to more countries, focusing on local journalists, often freelancers, who need it the most, is stalled for lack of funding. It deserves the serious consideration of media development funders, both NGOs and governmental departments. At the same time, organizations already involved in media training should encourage training that strengthens newsroom structures and practices from the perspective of safety in covering dangerous stories.

Introduction

2008 was a perfectly ordinary year in the world of journalism.

- On January 15, Carsten Thomassen, a Norwegian newspaper reporter, was one of eight people killed in a suicide bomb attack by Taliban militants in Kabul, Afghanistan.³
- On February 23, Shihab al-Tamimi, head of the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate, was shot after gunmen intercepted his car and opened fire in Baghdad's al-Waziriya neighborhood. Al-Tamimi, a critic of the U.S. presence in Iraq, died four days later.
- On March 27, Carlos Quispe Quispe, an intern at a government-owned radio station in Pucarani, Bolivia, was critically injured after being beaten on the head and chest with whips and metal rods by protestors demanding the ouster of the town's mayor, who was accused of corruption. Quispe, a journalism student, had regularly interviewed the mayor and hosted a call-in show for questions from the public; he was beaten after protestors broke down the door of the station during the demonstration, and he died two days later.
- On May 28, Paranirupasingham Devakumar, a correspondent for an independent Sri Lankan TV channel, was stabbed to death by supporters of the rebel Tamil Tiger group. He was attacked for his critical reporting about the rebels, according to a local press freedom group.
- On August 31, Magomed Yevloyev, owner of a popular Russian news Web site that reported on antigovernment protests in the Ingushetia region, died from a gunshot wound to the head while in police custody. Police said he was shot in a scuffle after he allegedly tried to take a gun away from an officer. He had been arrested at the airport, where he had arrived from Moscow to visit his parents and friends.
- On November 13, a gunman shot Armando Rodríguez, a crime reporter in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, at least eight times with a nine-millimeter weapon while he was sitting in a car owned by his newspaper. He died at the scene. His eight-year-old daughter was in the car at the time of the attack, but was not injured. Drug cartel members were suspected.

By the end of 2008, 66 journalists and media staff had been killed because they were doing their jobs. An untabulated, certainly much larger number suffered violent beatings.

Journalists everywhere complain about the challenges they face: deadlines

that won't flex, sources who won't talk, editors who won't listen, bosses who won't pay a living wage.

But year in and year out, in every region of the world—and with a grim consistency in certain troubled regions and countries—some journalists must add these to their list of challenges: Knives. Bullets. Bombs. Mortar shells. Land mines. Metal rods. Onrushing vehicles as weapons of assault. Murderous bare hands.

By the end of 2008 (the last full year for which statistics are available from all of the five major media groups that keep them), 66 journalists and media staff had been killed because they were doing their jobs, according to the tally of one respected international journalism group, the International Press Institute

(IPI).⁴ An untabulated, certainly much larger number suffered violent beatings. But despite all the publicity and advocacy, and enough data-laden reports to support an industry of researchers, there is nobody—not media organizations or individual governments, not multilateral bodies or international journalism groups—who has found a sure way to stanch the bloodshed.

In fact, the year 2008 was perfectly ordinary. Those 66 deaths of media staffers are an uncanny match to the average of 66.25 killed each year since 1997, according to that same tally.⁵

“It is a special war—a peacetime war on journalism,” said Miklos Haraszti, the representative on freedom of the media for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).⁶

Understanding the Problem

The numbers

Before you can solve a problem, it is critical to understand its scope and its causes as precisely as possible.

That is much easier said than done when it comes to the physical safety of journalists. The only regularly maintained, international statistics focus solely on deaths, not touching on beatings or kidnappings. Even within these statistics, there are large inconsistencies. Attempts to isolate the causes are complex, and sometimes misleading.

At least five major organizations publish annual reports on the deaths of journalists worldwide—and for 2008, a typical year, they reported five *completely* different totals, from a low of 42 to a high, nearly two and a half times greater, of 109.⁷

Much of the disparity results from definitions and methodology. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), which in 2008 reported the lowest number of deaths, also has the strictest approach. Those 42 journalists are on its “motive confirmed” list, meaning CPJ’s research demonstrates that the journalist “was murdered in direct reprisal for his or her work; was killed in crossfire during combat situations; or was killed while

carrying out a dangerous assignment such as coverage of a street protest.”⁸ Considering the uncertain conditions in most of the countries where these deaths have occurred, that is a demanding standard indeed. It rules out, for instance, a journalist killed while at home, unless there is solid confirmation of the motive—which is often missing, since so many of these cases are unsolved.

CPJ also keeps a separate list of deaths it deems suspicious, pending further investigation. Nearly all of those “motive unconfirmed” deaths appear on the lists from other organizations, which use broader standards. Including the “motive unconfirmed” deaths, CPJ’s 2008 total is 63—far closer to the reports from the International Press Institute (IPI), which shows

66 deaths, and the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), with 70.⁹

Likewise, methodology accounts for at least some of the disparity at the high end. The two other groups that report annually on the deaths of journalists—the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and INSI—both include drivers and other “media workers” on their lists, which increases the numbers, and INSI also includes “accidental or health-related”

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causes of death.¹⁰ For 2008, IFJ reports a total of 85 deaths, and INSI, 109.¹¹

And part of the issue is simply problematic monitoring. This is a concern in Latin America, according to participants at a 2007 press freedom conference in Austin, Texas. “Mexico and Brazil were mentioned as countries with numerous attacks against journalists but without an effective nationwide monitoring system,” said the conference report. “It is widely believed that both monitoring systems and categories of violations only offer a partial view of what is occurring in the Latin American media.”¹²

Databases on violence against journalists yield some notable figures:

A remarkably stable record. There is no apparent trend either of increasing or decreasing violence worldwide in the dozen or more years figures have been recorded. This is true even in tallies that use different methodologies. CPJ reported 42 deaths on its “motive confirmed” list for 2008; that almost precisely matches its average over 17 years of 42.64 per year. Likewise, IPI’s 66 deaths for 2008 compares to its annual average of 66.25 since its count began in 1997. The killing of 30 journalists in the Philippines in November 2009, as part of a massacre of 57 people in an apparent political attack, will certainly have at least some impact on the annual averages.

Violence close to home. “All politics is local,” former U.S. House Speaker Tip O’Neill famously preached. It is not quite true that all deaths of journalists are also local, but it is nearly so. For all the publicity generated when a Daniel Pearl is kidnapped and then brutally assassinated, the journalists who are killed doing their

jobs are overwhelmingly local journalists—working in their own countries, for local media houses, writing for and about people they know. Local journalists account for 87 percent of those on CPJ’s “motive confirmed” list since it began in 1992, and 89.7 percent from INSI.¹³

Whom they worked for. The great majority of journalists who died doing their jobs over the 17 years of CPJ’s survey were staff members, not freelance (approximately 88 percent for INSI, 87 percent for CPJ). CPJ reports that twice as many worked for print organizations (57 percent) as television (26 percent), with radio journalists accounting for 21 percent of the victims and Internet journalists, 2 percent (the total is more than 100 because some worked for several types of media).

How did they die? About 73 percent of the deaths were murder, according to CPJ, with the largest number killed by handguns or rifles. INSI offers a grisly accounting: out of 1,000 deaths tallied, 456 were shot, 101 were blown up, 10 were tortured, 7 were strangled, 4 were decapitated, and so on. Fewer than 2 percent died in crossfire in INSI’s accounting; CPJ counts 17 percent—still fewer than one in five deaths—in a broader category, “crossfire/combat-related” deaths.

Suspected perpetrators. This is a difficult category, since so many of the murders of journalists are unsolved. CPJ places political groups at the top of its list of suspected perpetrators in cases of murder, at 31 percent. Government officials are next at 24 percent, followed by “unknown” at 19 percent, criminal groups (12 percent), paramilitaries (7 percent), military (5 percent), local residents

(2 percent), and “mob” (1 percent). INSI is far less willing to draw conclusions about perpetrators, showing “unknown” for 63 percent of the murders.

Iraq: Read the numbers carefully.

The war in Iraq skewed the worldwide total of deaths of journalists dramatically upward. These statistics are particularly important to read carefully, especially for anyone seeking solutions.

For example, it might be natural for a Western media consumer to assume that most journalists killed in Iraq were foreign correspondents, and that most journalists’ deaths were the result of “crossfire/combat-related” causes such as random sniper fire and roadside bombs. On both counts, the opposite is true in Iraq.

During the first six full years of the war, CPJ’s breakdown shows that no fewer than 82 percent of the journalists killed were local journalists. And there is a startling mirror image in the cause of death for local journalists and foreign correspondents. While 71 percent of the foreign reporters were indeed killed by crossfire and related causes, precisely the same proportion of local journalists—71 percent of them—were murdered, according to CPJ.¹⁴

(In Afghanistan, on the other hand, at least so far, most of the reporters killed have been foreign correspondents. Of 16 deaths reported there in IPI’s tally

through the end of 2008, 12 were foreign correspondents, including one Afghan-born photographer employed by a Western news organization. Half of the 16 were killed in three incidents in a period of just over two weeks in November 2001, in the aftermath of the events of September 11.)

While murders are especially dramatic, everyone close to the problem of violence against journalists agrees that beatings and other attacks (or credible threats of violence) are far more numerous, almost equally dangerous, and not tabulated by anyone.

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Indeed, Ricardo Trotti, press freedom director of the Inter American Press Association (IAPA), wonders whether the murder statistics are really what people should be talking about.

“Those figures are so misleading because they show only obvious and tangible violence, like an iceberg whose

huge mass hides under the surface,” Trotti wrote in *Risk Map for Journalists*, an IAPA publication. “Today, there is another kind of violence, equally perverse, less obvious, and despicable. It is a subtle violence of creative threats ... just as effective or more so than the murder of journalists.”¹⁵

There are other forms of intimidation as well. Journalists may be kidnapped, or simply disappear, as happens particularly in Latin America. They may be imprisoned, or their newspapers or broadcast stations

closed down. In East Africa, “physical violence is occasional whereas legal harassment is pervasive,” said William Pike, a native of the Britain who has been a journalist and media executive in Uganda and Kenya for 25 years. “We have had many cases of harassment and intimidation (including death threats) but virtually no cases of actual physical violence.”¹⁶

CPJ does track imprisonments, at least to some extent, and it keeps a tally of missing journalists. But neither of these, and certainly not other forms of intimidation, are tracked as murders are. And nobody could point to any count on one of the most brutal—and widespread—forms of violence: beatings.

“Killings get the attention because of the gravity,” said Rodney Pinder, director of INSI. “But the number of countries where journalists trying to do their job are beaten are legion. It makes the job of being a journalist in those countries very dangerous.”¹⁷

That is the case in Armenia, a country with almost no cases of murdered journalists. Edik Baghdasaryan is the editor in chief of *Hetq Online*, a Web production of the nongovernmental organization Investigative Journalists of Armenia. In November 2008, he was attacked by three men, an action he is convinced was linked to his coverage of the business dealings of a former government minister. One attacker is in jail, but the person Baghdasaryan calls the “mastermind” has not been identified, “although everybody knows who he is.”¹⁸ Baghdasaryan was beaten with stones and fell unconscious. He was unable to work for months, and believes he only survived because a policeman happened upon the scene while the beating was in progress.

Typically, he said, beatings in Armenia happen around the time of elections, and “generally the objects of violence are journalists working with opposition media.” Out of 18 beatings in 2008 alone, he said, all but two were connected to political coverage.

The causes

A huge reason why solving the problem of journalists’ safety is so challenging is simply that the types of threats are so diverse—and a different solution may be in order for each type. Journalists are in danger as a result of outright efforts to prevent coverage (or seek retribution for it), whether by government agents or private parties. Other threats include ethnic rivalries, purely dangerous situations such as wartime or a violence-torn society, or even, sometimes, journalists’ own biases or lapses.

In its exhaustive, invaluable report, *Killing the Messenger*, INSI lays out three broad “dangerous situations” in which journalistic casualties occur¹⁹:

- *International armed conflicts involving two or more states.* The most prominent current example is Iraq. Earlier, it was Bosnia. As noted above, while some of these deaths do happen when journalists are caught in a war’s crossfire or are killed by roadside bombs, it would be misleading to assume that is the main cause. Even in this wartime setting, outright murders still constitute a strong majority of journalists’ deaths in Iraq.
- *National armed conflicts, where one of the participants may or may not be the internationally*

recognized sovereign power.
This covers situations of civil war or other conflict, such as the Sri Lankan government’s battle with the so-called Tamil Tigers. Journalists in these conflicts could be targeted by either side, or both; sometimes, where the media are strongly partisan, they can even become part of the conflict.

- *Peacetime, where there is no internal conflict, but where there is persistent criminal or political violence.* Mexico, with its drug wars, and Russia, with shadowy attacks from organized crime or government agents, are prominent in this category, which has become one of the largest and most troublesome.

Then there is another cause of violence against journalists: their own practices. Even some of the most aggressive defenders of the media acknowledge the issue of journalistic responsibility.

Those categories help frame the problem of journalists’ safety, but since each of them encompasses various different types of violence, they still leave any overall solution elusive. In Colombia, for example, a journalist may be targeted because of reporting on the drug business. In Guatemala, on the other hand, a high level of violence also prevails, claiming journalists as victims—but there, “journalists aren’t just targets because they’re journalists, but because everyone is a target,” said Sarah Grainger, who covers the country for Reuters.²⁰ A solution aimed at the special issues of Colombia

might not address those of Guatemala, and the reverse is certainly true.

At a Press Freedom Day forum on Capitol Hill in April 2009, CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon raised another fascinating possible cause of violence: the Internet. Ironically, he said, it “helped make the world more dangerous for reporters because militant groups discovered an alternative method for communicating with their followers ... Journalists, who were once useful to even the baddest and the meanest, were suddenly expendable. Worse, if your message was terror, killing a journalist was an excellent way to spread fear.”²¹

Then there is another cause of violence against journalists: their own practices. This may simply be due to lack of reasonable care in dangerous situations. “Many of these [murdered] journalists practiced unsafe journalism,” argued Drew

Sullivan, advising editor for the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project in Sarajevo. “If they had a good editor who edited their copy and held them to strict newsroom safety practices, some, maybe most, would be alive today.”²²

Even some of the most aggressive defenders of the media acknowledge the issue of journalistic responsibility. “It is also true that the death of a journalist is not only in retaliation for an opinion, criticism, or denunciation,” wrote Gonzalo Marroquín, then the editor of *Prensa Libre* in Guatemala

City and chair of the Committee on Freedom of the Press and Information for the IAPA. “At times, reporters—and their editors—work negligently, carelessly, and without taking the necessary safety precautions to lessen the risks and still produce good quality.”²³

Grainger agrees, stressing there is a “fine line” in looking at responsibility and violence with regard to journalists. “You can’t really say that journalists are impartial here,” she said of the situation in Guatemala, noting that media organizations can be backed by the same special interests and power brokers as government officials are. The idea that journalists are “above the fray” is not always true, Grainger said, and their involvement in—not just coverage of—contentious issues can contribute to their risk.²⁴

The hotspots of violence

IPI’s “Death Watch” listing includes no fewer than 80 countries in which at least one journalist has died in the ten-year period from 1999 through 2008.

Without doubt, the most dangerous country to be a journalist in those years has been Iraq, in strict numerical terms. Through the end of 2008, 136 journalists had died there by CPJ’s count, 166 by IPI’s.

Likewise, other regional conflicts have claimed large numbers of victims. IPI, for example, reported 20 deaths in Serbia in a single year, 1999. The eight deaths in Afghanistan in the post-9/11 fighting in 2001 constitute another example of a conflict-driven spike in numbers.

But if you are in search of solutions, it may be instructive to look at the numbers in a different way—focusing on countries

where violent death is a year in, year out fact of life for journalists.

The following list narrows the statistics in that way, showing just the countries that have appeared on IPI’s “Death Watch” for at least seven of the 10 years from 1999 through 2008, with at least 15 total deaths in that time:

- Colombia (58 deaths; on the list 8 of the 10 years)
- Philippines (55 deaths; 9 out of 10 years)
- Russia (42 deaths; on the list all 10 years)
- Mexico (27 deaths; 8 years)
- India (26 deaths; 7 years)
- Pakistan (24 deaths; 9 years)
- Sri Lanka (19 deaths; 7 years)
- Brazil (15 deaths; 8 years)
- Palestinian Territories (15 deaths; 7 years)

CPJ’s more restrictive methodology shows lower numbers for each of these countries. Still, CPJ and IPI have strong areas of agreement on the pattern. Both show Colombia, the Philippines and Russia in the top three in this sorting; both show Russia as the only country where there has been at least one journalist killed in every one of these 10 years. Both also show Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India on their death lists for at least seven of the past 10 years.

What is life like for journalists in one of those hotspot countries?

Rowena Paraan is a director of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), and executive coordinator of the Media Safety Office set up in Manila by NUJP and IFJ to address the killings of journalists in her country. She described some of what she has seen:

“We’ve had cases of police chiefs in the province making publishers and editors eat an issue of their newspaper because the police chief did not like what it reported. We’ve had congressmen and the defense chief publicly saying it’s okay to kill journalists since they are corrupt anyway. These actions and statements send the signal that if you don’t like what a journalist has written, go ahead, threaten him, harass him—or even kill him.”²⁵

Beyond the numbers: Why should people care?

It’s a question that must be asked. In a world in which thousands die every day from ethnic or criminal violence or disease or poverty, then what does it matter if 40, or 50, or 60 journalists die each year, some of them the victims of murder? Why should individual citizens, much less busy governments or multilateral organizations, care about these particular deaths?

Speaking to a conference of journalists in 2007 in Moscow, Miklos Haraszti, the representative on freedom of the media for OSCE, argued that these murders and other acts of violence will have a profound ripple effect, choking off exactly the sorts of probing, challenging coverage that free societies need. “Violence becomes

editorship far beyond the context of the actual controversy; it will impede the press in performing its most important task in defense of democracy, because it is journalists covering *human rights abuses* and *corruption scandals* that are most punished with violence,” Haraszti said.²⁶

And, he added: “The effect of the violence extends to the whole society by collapsing editors’ willpower. Editors are the ones in any democracy that practically define which issues are to be reported and discussed.”

Roman Shleynov is a reporter for *Novaya Gazeta*, an independent Russian newspaper that has seen several journalists killed in recent years. This sort of violence, he said, does create an impact on journalism, in a very specific way. Most coverage is not affected, he said. But certain coverage areas, such as a highly dangerous region like Chechnya, are different.²⁷

It was her coverage of Chechnya, most people familiar with the case believe, that led to the 2006 murder of Anna Politkovskaya, an investigative journalist who wrote for *Novaya Gazeta*. Three years later, as the *Christian Science Monitor* reported, the Russian newspaper “has stopped sending journalists to cover events in the republic out of fear for their lives.”²⁸

“It is a great problem for the editor in chief who asks himself whether it is possible to cover the situation in Chechnya, or are the authorities there so unpredictable that you cannot guarantee the security of journalists,” Shleynov said. “By the way, journalists themselves do not ask that question, they are eager to continue their work. But the reaction of the editor is quite understandable. So that is the problem.”

Ironically, it was a dead man—one of the victims of the violence—who published perhaps the most eloquent case for why journalists must keep doing their work, despite any danger.

On January 8, 2009, Lasantha Wickrematunge, longtime editor of the *Sunday Leader* newspaper in Sri Lanka, a journalist known for his critical reporting about the government and assaulted twice before, was stabbed to death.

But he did not die in silence. Anticipating what might happen, the editor had left behind an article to be printed in the *Sunday Leader* in the event of his violent death. “No other profession calls on its practitioners to lay down their lives for their art save the armed forces and, in Sri Lanka, journalism,” begins the letter, which was published three days after his murder.²⁹ “In the course of the past few years, the independent media have increasingly come under attack ... Countless journalists have been harassed, threatened and killed. It has been my honour to belong to all those categories and now especially the last.”

He talks about facing the risks of journalism in Sri Lanka, and asks himself whether it is worth it, particularly as “a husband, and the father of three wonderful children.” He talks about friends who had urged him to return to practicing law; about diplomats who had offered him safe passage to

escape the country; about political leaders who had offered him high office.

But, he replies, “there is a calling that is yet above high office, fame, lucre and security. It is the call of conscience.”

He promises, near the end of his long open letter, that the *Sunday Leader* will not back down. It was inevitable that he would be killed, he writes. “But if we do not speak out now, there will be no one left to speak for those who cannot, whether they be ethnic minorities, the disadvantaged or the persecuted.”

“No other profession calls on its practitioners to lay down their lives for their art save the armed forces and, in Sri Lanka, journalism.”

*— Lasantha Wickrematunge,
longtime editor of the Sunday Leader*

But for every Lasantha Wickrematunge and Sunday Leader that hold to their coverage in the face of violent assault, monitors of the worldwide problem say there are many, many more journalists who succumb.

Self-censorship, says Trotti of the IAPA, is the direct impact of the atmosphere of violence and pervasive threats against journalists in Latin America. He cites the publisher of the weekly newspaper *Zeta* in Tijuana, where two editors were killed, as saying in 2006 that six other Mexican newspapers “had decided not to continue reporting on drug trafficking.”³⁰

The IAPA has intensively investigated all aspects of this problem in key Latin American countries—including sending out journalists from a “Rapid Response Unit,” a special mission of IAPA members

sent to look into an issue in person and put pressure on those responsible for handling it. In 2008, María Idalia Gómez, a member of that team, visited Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico, to report on the murder of Miguel Angel Villagómez Valle, the 29-year-old editor and founder of the daily newspaper *La Noticia de Michoacán*.

Under Villagómez the newspaper had done its best to cover criminal activities in the region, which have centered around the drug trade. But, Gómez reported after the visit: “It no longer includes news of organized crime, nor even any follow-up to the murder and the failure of the authorities to make any progress. The reason: his family and the journalists are scared.”³¹

Francisco Rivera, who succeeded Villagómez as *La Noticia de Michoacán*’s editor, told Gómez that out of fear of reprisal against its journalists, the newspaper had switched to a policy of self-censorship on the topic of organized crime. “That voluntary omission has been protested by the readers,” Gómez wrote, “but it is the only weapon that Rivera says he has against the risk that his reporters face and to be able to ‘live with fear.’”

Impunity: Making a bad problem even worse

In his 2007 speech in Moscow, Haraszti noted that he had recently provided

his own organization with “a list of the gravest dangers looming for media freedom in the OSCE area.” As the top danger, he said, “I named violence against journalists, and I added: ‘There is only one thing more intimidating for free speech than harassment, physical attacks, and murder of media workers; and that is when governments *tolerate* harassment, attacks, and murders.’”³²

It is what happens *after* a journalist is killed that raises some of the most serious alarm for advocacy groups.

Or rather, what doesn’t happen.

“One of the most shocking statistics to emerge from the INSI inquiry is that in some 63 percent of cases, the perpetrator of deliberate killings of media workers remains unknown,” reads the *Killing the Messenger* report. Even if the perpetrator is known, that does not seem to matter. Out

of 657 deliberate murders INSI studied, “only 27 have resulted in the identification and conviction of the perpetrators, little more than 4 percent of the cases.”³³

These figures, the organization concludes, “show it is virtually risk free to kill a journalist ... (A)nd the more the killers get away with it the more the spiral of death is forced upwards. This is the most shocking fact at the heart of the [INSI] inquiry. Impunity for the killers of

“There is only one thing more intimidating for free speech than harassment, physical attacks, and murder of media workers; and that is when governments tolerate harassment, attacks, and murders.”

— Miklos Haraszti, representative on freedom of the media, OSCE

journalists, who put themselves in harm's way to keep us all informed, shames governments around the world."³⁴

Recognizing impunity as a serious problem, many of the major press advocacy groups have mounted their own campaigns on this issue:

- The IAPA has the longest track record on this topic: it launched its Impunity Project in 1995, focusing on murders throughout Latin America.³⁵
- CPJ has its Global Campaign Against Impunity, inspired, it says, by IAPA's efforts. CPJ also publishes an annual Impunity Index ranking the countries with the worst record compared to their size. It has also produced a special report on impunity in Russia.³⁶
- IFJ has its Campaign Against Impunity in Crimes Against Journalists, and published its own report on impunity in Russia, *Partial Justice*, in 2009.³⁷
- IPI has a Justice Denied Campaign, focusing on journalists who have been murdered or who remain imprisoned in some form of legal limbo.³⁸

- Reporters Without Borders (RSF, for its French initials) has a Predators list on its Web site, including a full gallery of mug shots of the people it deems particularly responsible for impunity.³⁹

Impunity is likewise a matter of concern for multinational groups. "Putting an end to impunity fulfills our need for justice," said Koïchiro Matsuura, then director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in 2003. "In addition it will do much to prevent the abuses occurring in the first place."⁴⁰

But while INSI's *Killing the Messenger* quotes Matsuura's sentiment, the report quickly moves to deflate optimism. "Sadly, an end to impunity remains a long way off," the report concludes. "Reducing impunity for those involved in attacks on journalists can be achieved, but the growth and reinforcing of legal norms and press freedoms is of necessity an incremental process."⁴¹

The report goes on to cite one possible ray of hope, noting that Joel Simon of CPJ had pointed to Brazil as a country where a legacy of impunity seemed to be easing. But as if to prove how elusive progress can be, exactly two years after the INSI report's March 2007 publication, CPJ would add Brazil to its international Impunity Index.

Covering a foreign war: A minefield of safety issues

As noted, a careful reading of the statistics about the deaths of journalists in the Iraq war reveals that foreign correspondents account for fewer than one out of five of the deaths, and the vast majority of those are killed in crossfire or related causes rather than outright murder—which is the overwhelming cause of deaths of local journalists in Iraq. But none of this should minimize the safety issues modern warfare raises for international media organizations. In fact, these issues are more complicated—and more costly—than ever before.

“One of the most worrying trends has been to take journalists hostage—especially in Iraq and the Palestinian territories,” says a report, *Killing Journalism*, from a 2006 London conference on war reporting held by the journalism think tank Polis. “Journalists see themselves in a bubble as observers,” Adrian Wells, then head of foreign operations for Sky News, said. “But we are now regarded as being part of the conflict, legitimate targets for kidnapping and reprisals.”

So what level of precautions should journalists, and their organizations, take?

In one of his Sunday columns, Clark Hoyt, public editor for the *New York Times*, discussed how a news organization deals with some of those issues, dissecting an event in September 2009 when a *Times* reporter was captured and then rescued from a Taliban hideout (his Afghan interpreter and a British rescuer were killed).

Hoyt explained that “the recriminations began immediately” after the reporter, Stephen Farrell, was rescued, including a comment from the British foreign secretary that the reporter had ignored “very strong advice” not to go to the area where he was captured. Hoyt also noted the precautions Farrell had taken before he left the Kabul bureau, and wrote that the kind of independent reporting Farrell was doing “is often the only way to uncover truths that governments and militaries do not want the public to know.”

But Hoyt also pointed to issues he believed the newspaper should address in covering the fighting in Afghanistan, based on his review of the case. The *New York Times* should be sure “there is a clear structure through which go, no-go decisions are made”; it should address “the training of the Afghan staff”; and it should assure that the paper’s Afghan operation is as well-informed on security threats around the country as its Iraq operation is.

All of this points to fundamental ways in which war coverage—like the nature of war itself—has changed in the past decade, requiring a new approach to the safety of journalists. Fighting in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan no longer involves easy distinctions between one side and the other, or clear battleground delineations. Making matters tougher, Pinder of INSI pointed out, the relationship between journalists and combatants has changed dramatically. In earlier conflicts, forces fighting against Western troops commonly felt they needed Western journalists to help “tell their story.” Now that is no longer so true because of the availability of the Internet and other effective forms of communication, and “journalists are being targeted as never before.”

Meanwhile, in countries where war coverage can mean going out into isolated villages in countries where a Westerner may be both culturally clueless and linguistically challenged, as well as highly conspicuous, news organizations are relying more on local staff and stringers—from interpreters to “fixers” to drivers to experienced local reporters.

That poses additional challenges since the local staff are also more susceptible to targeted attack. In a 2007 survey of American journalists in Iraq, “two-thirds said that most or all of their street reporting was done by local citizens, yet 87 percent said that it was not safe for their Iraqi reporters to openly carry notebooks, cameras or anything else that identified them as journalists.”

The local staff are key to helping foreign reporters assess the risk involved in covering a particular story. This reality, wrote John Burns in the *New York Times* blog “At War,” led the *Times* to develop “a series of best-practice measures we thought most likely to minimize the risks, to foreign and local staff alike.” Burns

explained: “Paramount among these was our ‘willing partners’ rule, which held that no reporter or photographer should venture out on assignment without the informed consent of the local staff accompanying him or her, and that no local staffer should be subjected, by the expatriate staff, to arm-twisting or any other form of duress.”

He acknowledged: “This was a hard rule to enforce, since local staff were sometimes reluctant to speak out, however much we encouraged them, for fear of being judged wimpish by others among the drivers, interpreters and security guards. But all in all, the practice worked well.”

Today, larger outlets such as the *Times* typically contract with an international security firm to support and advise their overseas war bureaus. In Iraq, Hoyt wrote, the paper “spends more than \$3 million a year maintaining an extensive operation with 24-hour armed protection.”

That is one thing he found missing in the Afghan incident. In that country, he said later in an interview, the security situation had deteriorated so rapidly, “it caught everyone by surprise.” In a situation like this, he said, it is essential to have one person in the Kabul bureau responsible for deciding whether or not reporters should go out to dangerous locations—and making that decision based on reliable intelligence from a trusted source. The *Times* does it that way in Baghdad, he observed, and, he wrote in his column, the paper’s foreign editor was now recommending employing a full-time security consultant in Kabul as well.

Hal Bernton, a *Seattle Times* reporter on assignment to the McClatchy news bureau in Kabul, said that he and other reporters there received guidance from experts monitoring security and police reports: “I think the most important thing to do is to understand the true security risks of an area—not the hype—so you can assess your risks accurately.”

Also, he said, “We keep ourselves as low profile as possible, and hope to be much less of a target albeit a more vulnerable one should someone opt to attack.” He was advised by other reporters to grow a beard and wear a scarf around his neck when out on coverage, Bernton said, and he checks his dress with his local interpreter before going out on assignment. He stressed that he depends on his interpreter—himself a local journalist—for safety assessments on trips outside of Kabul, and Bernton “would not pressure him into taking trips that he deemed to be unsafe.”

Hoyt, of the *New York Times*, has personal experience in this subject. As news editor for the Knight Ridder bureau in Washington, D.C., he had responsibility for working with the organization’s Baghdad bureau. There, Knight Ridder contracted with Centurion Risk Assessment Services, a UK-based firm that worked in Baghdad with both U.S. and Iraqi journalists and support staff. Centurion monitored the risk situation on the ground in Iraq and provided virtually daily training, such as helping local drivers understand how to spot bad situations on the road, how to carry out evasive driving, etc. “It was really important training, and made a real difference,” Hoyt said.

The nature of covering this new type of war, he continued, is uniquely demanding. The journalist is unarmed, going into dangerous situations where the nature of the combatants is murky at best, having to make hundreds of decisions with no chance for reflection. “The more you can equip people with ways to think about situations and be able to react to them,” he said, “the better they will be able to do their jobs.”

¹ Charlie Beckett, *Killing Journalism*, report from conference held by Polis, London, United Kingdom, September 29, 2006, linked from INSI, <http://www.newssafety.org/images/stories/pdf/programme/mediamilitary/killingjournalism.pdf>.

² Clark Hoyt, “Calculations of War: Which Risk is Reasonable?” *The New York Times*, September 20, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/20/opinion/20pubed.html?_r=1.

³ Rodney Pinder (director, INSI), in telephone interview with the author, Brussels, Belgium, October 8, 2009.

⁴ Richard Pérez-Peña, “Grim View of Iraq Dangers in Survey of Journalists,” *The New York Times*, November 28, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/28/business/media/28pew.html>.

⁵ John F. Burns, “John Burns on Those Who Aid War Journalists,” from the *New York Times* blog, “At War,” September 9, 2009, <http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/09/john-burns-discusses-sultan-munadi/>.

⁶ Clark Hoyt (public editor, *The New York Times*), in telephone interview with author, New York, New York, September 28, 2009.

Doing Something About It

Nobody has come up with a sure answer for how to end violence against journalists. But that's not for lack of trying. Organizations ranging from local journalist associations all the way up to the Security Council of the United Nations have contributed to the discussion, and millions of dollars are being spent every year in support of journalists in dangerous situations.

There are two main thrusts in the “doing something about it” realm. One involves aggressive advocacy and monitoring, in an attempt to bring international pressure to bear to reduce the level of violent attacks against journalists. The other focuses on mitigation: training and preparation aimed to keep journalists safer as they do their jobs.

Advocacy—and pressure

A half-dozen international organizations have placed the safety of journalists at or near the very top of their agendas, and it is undeniable that they have produced extraordinarily strong, hard-hitting work.

CPJ's *Anatomy of Injustice* report is just one example of the sort of exhaustive documentation and analysis these groups can bring to the task. It lays out the details of 17 murders of journalists in Russia since 2000, “identifying systemic investigative shortcomings and outlining potential remedies.” The report, based on four CPJ missions to Russia and independent reporting inside the country, was produced both as a 70-page bound report and online, supported by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.⁴²

NUJP's Rowena Paraan, reporting from the front lines in the Philippines, said local journalism advocates are grateful to the international media monitoring organizations. “Sadly, it seems the only thing that the present administration [in the Philippines] listens to is the pressure from the international community,” she said. “The first task force on media killings, for example, was set up only after international groups conducted fact-finding missions on the killings and issued their reports.”⁴³

Still, some have asked, in effect, whether there are too many separate voices, suggesting that better coordination might result in more impact. Harold Evans, former editor of the *Times* and the *Sunday Times* of London, put it this way in his introduction to *Killing the Messenger*: “The organizations concerned with the freedom of the press and human rights have played a significant role in the cases where justice has been done. Personally, I would like to see more cooperation and coordination among them.”⁴⁴

There are, to be sure, examples of coordination among these groups.

Starting in early 2008, and continuing through and after elections that spring, several international missions including representatives of IPI, RSF, IFJ, UNESCO, and eight other organizations visited Nepal “to voice concerns about continuing press freedom violations,” among other things. During the final mission, in June, an IPI delegation met with a number of officials, including an official of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), which had won the most votes. That official promised

that his party “would promote targeting impunity,” read an IPI report. It continued: “These strong verbal commitments to press freedom made by the political leaders presented an encouraging first step in the country’s transition to democracy. It remains to be seen, however, whether concrete action will follow these statements.”⁴⁵

But like Evans, Pinder, of INSI, said he has not seen as much progress in the area of coordination as he would wish. “I don’t think there’s been much of a coming together,” he said. “There are still strong rivalries, which is a bit of a surprise to me. Organizations tend to be very turf conscious. We can’t even settle on a uniform method of counting casualties!”

He does think that there have been some positive signs of cooperation, especially in the area of safety, where he believes “we have crossed boundaries”—and he believes that could provide a model for other ways international advocacy groups could combine their efforts to achieve greater impact.⁴⁶

Simon of CPJ acknowledges that inter-group coordination is “one of the things we’re working on,” and said that CPJ is hoping to organize some sort of “impunity summit” of major groups in 2010. But he added that there are different views on this topic, and his own view is that a “multitude of voices,” a wide variety of independent groups all taking action separately, “actually is helpful.” CPJ, IPI,

and RSF all have sent separate missions to Russia in a relatively short period of time, he noted. When there is such a wave of attention from different groups, he argued, “it’s harder for [the Russian government] to deal with that than with one big group.”⁴⁷

Training and preparation to reduce the risk of violence

There is widespread acknowledgement that the problem of violence against journalists—like humanity’s problem of violence in general—is never going to disappear entirely. But relatively recently, the journalism community has also come

to acknowledge that if it were to do a better job of training and preparing journalists for dangerous coverage situations, the scale of the casualties could at least be drastically reduced.

Perhaps that seems as though it should have been obvious. But for whatever reason—a macho attitude of invincibility, a competitive zeal to get the story, a disdain for training of any sort, or an organization’s tight control of the budget—journalists traditionally plunged in without any formal preparation for the consequences.

That has begun changing in the past 15 years, and at a more accelerated rate since 2003.

Since the early- to mid-1990s, faced with an increasing dangerous range of deadly regional conflicts, journalists have been

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taking so-called “hostile environment training” classes that cover everything from off-road driving techniques to chemical and biological weapon response. By early 2001, in part honoring the wish of the family of an Associated Press Television Network photojournalist killed in Sierra Leone the previous year, major news agencies in the United Kingdom came together to adopt “common safety policies.” Richard Tait, then editor in chief of Independent Television News, explained: “Our guidelines cover assignment, training, protective equipment, post-traumatic counseling and insurance.”⁴⁸

“Although we’re often competing with one another, we’ve agreed to pool information on potentially dangerous assignments,” Tait said.

After 9/11, with its urgent message about just *how* hostile the coverage environments were becoming around the world, major media organizations stepped up their efforts on journalists’ safety. “It is clearly time ... for responsible news organizations around the world to provide mandatory safety training for staff likely to be deployed to war zones or other hostile environments,” Chris Cramer, then president of CNN International Networks, wrote in an article in 2002.⁴⁹

His own network had already been providing some hostile environment training, he said, but now it would be mandatory—and paid for, both for staff and freelance

contractors. “What’s tragic and depressing is that some other news organizations have been unwilling to take the financial risk to protect their staff,” he wrote.

Later that same year, in response to a joint initiative by IFJ and IPI, a conference in Brussels of journalists, media executives, press freedom groups, and others decided it was time to create an umbrella organization to tackle just this one large, shared problem: the safety of journalists. On Press Freedom Day in 2003, the International News Safety Institute was formally launched, with the mission “to promote best safety practice

in news coverage including journalist training, operational procedures, equipment provision and health issues.”⁵⁰

INSI quickly received its baptism by fire, as hundreds of international correspondents arrived to report on the Iraq war “without the most basic training on what to expect or how best to

survive,” as INSI put it. In a description of media-military relations and INSI’s work in that field, Pinder commented: “Far too often, journalists are the only untrained professionals on the battlefield, lacking essential survival skills and proper safety equipment. War reporting will never be safe but we can—and must—make it safer.”⁵¹

INSI raises money from international donors to provide safety training free of charge where it is most needed; acts as

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— Chris Cramer, former president of CNN International Networks

a hub for safety information, including a page of advisories about such things as unexploded shells in Gaza and health alerts (for example, about the Hanta virus); publishes safety guidelines; promotes industry “safe practices;” works for better military-media understanding on the battlefield; and works to investigate, develop and promote better safety services, including affordable insurance.

As of December 2009, INSI reported that it has trained approximately 1,600 media staff in 21 countries, including Iraq, Rwanda, Venezuela, Sri Lanka and other hotspots.⁵²

The organization, like other training providers, emphasizes that training needs to be tailored to specific circumstances. But there are also broad elements common to a variety of needs. INSI’s Web site lays out several basic elements its general training includes—from “personal conflict management” (learning to work in situations with the potential of conflict, whether from aggressive individuals or violent crowds, “using subtle body language and verbalization to influence aggressors’ reactions”) to first aid, vehicle security, and general risk assessment. There are even special segments on “ballistic awareness and cover from fire” (for example, “what constitutes good cover from various weapon types ... [and] positioning of crews to minimize the threats these weapons represent”) and “mine awareness” (how to recognize and avoid minefields—and, in case you find yourself in one, “the actions to take in order to ensure safe extraction”).⁵³

Pinder said he is pleased to see the industry taking more responsibility. “More and more news organizations are taking safety more seriously than they used to,” he

said, providing more training, equipment and heightened awareness of the issue. “There is still a long, long way to go, but it is a heartening development.”⁵⁴

It is mostly the large organizations—major television networks and news services, and newspapers of the size of the *New York Times* or the *Guardian* in London—that provide this sort of training for their journalists. Close observers think many more companies should be stepping up.

“How can you sleep at night knowing that the people you send there have not been trained properly?” asked John Owen, a professor of international journalism at City University, London. “If newspapers can pay columnists, in some cases more than £200,000 [roughly \$324,000] a year, then they can find the money to provide lifesaving safety training to their journalists and their local fixers and interpreters.”⁵⁵

INSI may be the most visible in advocating for and providing safety training for journalists, but other journalism organizations and nonprofits also offer training manuals and connect journalists with training resources.

The France-based RSF publishes a practical guide for journalists in war zones as well as, with UNESCO, a comprehensive “Handbook for Journalists”; runs a “Press SOS” hotline; and has an arrangement with the French Red Cross to provide training.⁵⁶ CPJ recommends hostile-environment training tailored for journalists by several security companies, as part of a thorough guide to safety precautions.⁵⁷

UNESCO also independently sponsors safety training. “A specific goal of any

security strategy should be training for local journalists, as international journalists are often heavily equipped and protected,” the agency states on its program page. “It is the local journalist who is the most vulnerable.”⁵⁸ In August 2009, for example, UNESCO organized a training course in Cairo for 35 media professionals from 20 media outlets from Gaza.⁵⁹

As the safety training experience has matured, there has also been growing awareness that it must range far beyond training for wartime situations. When Grainger, now with Reuters, worked for the BBC, she received its hostile-environment training. But that was geared to the issues a reporter might face in Iraq, Afghanistan, Congo—violence in the context of a political framework, “rebels against the government, that sort of thing.” In Guatemala, where she works now, the risks are also great—but they are issues of more random violence. “Here, you just don’t know,” she said. “It’s a situation like I haven’t been in before,” and something hostile-environment training doesn’t address.⁶⁰

In recognition of the different situations on the ground—and particularly the need to train local reporters, not just foreign correspondents—INSI has worked with various partners to provide free training in numerous countries that are not experiencing traditional war situations. Among them, for example, are Haiti, the Philippines, Zimbabwe, and Colombia.⁶¹

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But safety training can be expensive: depending on the scope, estimates range from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per person. And Pinder, of INSI, laments that not enough funding groups—governments, multilaterals or media development organizations—are willing to support the sort of effort that would help protect local journalists in dangerous situations around the world.

In 2008, he said, INSI took a program proposal titled “Towards a Global Culture of Safety in Media” to an international donor conference at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. It laid out a plan costing €15 million over five years (approximately \$22 million), nearly all of it devoted to training.⁶²

Pinder said the plan “has been presented to all of the major government donors, including USAID, with whom I met personally in DC.” He said: “[INSI] underlined the relatively small amount

requested, pointing out that in 2007 four of the biggest news organizations alone, all INSI members—CNN, BBC, Reuters, and the AP—reported spending a total in excess of \$20 million on news safety, most of it on training and safety equipment for their staff. We stressed that most endangered news people fell outside the safety nets provided by the big guys—and that’s our area of concern.”⁶³

To date, though, the only support has come from Norway, for a relatively small amount to support a news safety index, Pinder said. Pinder agrees with a point raised by

Sullivan, in Sarajevo, that safety training should happen much earlier than it does now—not just with reporters, and not just after the problems have happened out in the field, but proactively, working with the whole newsroom.

With something on the order of \$250 million going into media development from various international journalism training organizations, Pinder said, “the amount that goes to safety training out of that is minuscule.” He agrees there needs to be more training that is not reactive (after the war has started or after the murders have happened), but rather on the front end, preparing reporters and editors alike for these situations before they happen. “That’s why we put so much stress on the development aspect of it,” he said. “Safety should be part of every journalist’s toolkit.”

Simon, of CPJ, understands INSI’s frustration on this point. “Press freedom and safety are part of the media development package—or they should be,” he said. But far too often, he said, trainers go into a country and teach journalists to do aggressive coverage that challenges their governments—and then leave without preparing them for the consequences, the real safety issues, when they actually produce that coverage.⁶⁴

Far too often trainers go into a country and teach journalists to do aggressive coverage that challenges their governments—and then leave without preparing them for the consequences, the real safety issues, when they actually produce that coverage.

What media outlets and journalists can do

In addition to the work international advocacy groups do—applying pressure on foreign governments, and promoting safety training for media workers—most analysts of the problem of violence against journalists also believe that individual journalists themselves, and the organizations they work for, can and should be doing things to minimize the problem.

Improve the journalism. Many of the countries with the worst records of violence against journalists are also countries where the profession of journalism is still developing—and where its practice can still be loose and free-swinging. Some feel that can be as dangerous to the journalist as anything the government or criminal elements might do.

“I firmly believe that the best personal security measure a journalist can take is to be honest, objective, ethically responsible and really independent,” a Latin American journalist told the INSI researchers as they were preparing their *Killing the Messenger* report.⁶⁵ At the Austin forum on press freedom in Latin America and the Caribbean, “several participants mentioned the lack of professionalism as an opportunity for the enemies of press freedom,” including, for example, Bolivia, “where the low

standards of the media and journalists—in particular, a strong oppositional slant in the reporting allow the government to harshly question and undermine the media.”⁶⁶

USAID tackled this problem with a project in the Terai region of Nepal. “At times, inflammatory media reports based on stereotypes and generalizations have triggered violence” between ethnic groups there, said a report on the project. “And over the past two years, various agitating groups in the Terai have targeted media outlets and journalists.”⁶⁷

The project teamed up pairs of reporters—one from each of the two competing ethnic groups—to do stories in each others’ districts. The result, according to the report, was 60 articles published in the region’s newspapers, increased accuracy in the journalism, and an improved atmosphere of tolerance.

Raising journalistic standards can simply involve showing some basic respect—but it can help protect the reporter at the same time.

Take responsibility—inside the newsroom. Drew Sullivan and Rosemary Armao have worked with journalists in highly dangerous coverage situations in Sarajevo, where Sullivan oversees the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and Armao was a consulting editor with a sister organization, the Bosnia-based Center for Investigative Reporting. They are convinced that well-managed newsrooms can help avoid many of the problems of violent attacks.

“Safety starts with editors, and not CPJ or INSI,” Sullivan said. “While these

organizations are great, it is only the editors and reporters themselves who can save themselves. They need better standards, better practices, and better trainings.”⁶⁸

“Reporters are not a good judge of danger—they’re way too close,” Armao said in an interview from Albany, New York, where she is now an assistant professor of journalism at the State University of New York. “They either downplay it, or exaggerate it.”⁶⁹ At the Sarajevo office, Armao said, it is a firing offense for a reporter to fail to tell editors about any threats or bribe attempts. Threats are important to know about, Sullivan noted: “They give you information. They let you know there is an issue.”

Paraan’s experience in the Philippines reinforces what Sullivan and Armao said. “Among journalists, the culture of machismo is very strong,” she explained. “And at times, threats received by reporters are regarded as a sign that the reporter has arrived at a certain level of importance or that one is making an impact as a journalist. Which is not necessarily true, of course. Thus, many disregard the threats. Documentation by the NUJP though reveals that the majority of those killed actually received threats prior to the killing.”⁷⁰

Other elements of Sullivan’s internal newsroom safety strategy include teaching reporters how to spot someone following them, changing reporters on dangerous stories, establishing plans in advance about what to do if something goes wrong, and even putting stories on hold. “No story is worth the harming of a reporter, but every story can be told,” he said. “Tell it when the danger has subsided.”

In the end, Sullivan said:

“Nobody can help you but yourself. We’ve given reports to the police, but we know that does nothing. We’ve considered hiring armed guards, but many security firms have ties to corrupt politicians and mafia. The only thing you can do is an immediate newsroom response. It should not be put on the shoulders of the reporter as it often is. It is the editors’ problem, and they have to act to the full extent they can.”⁷¹

Solidarity—from the top. Journalism is a business, and often a highly competitive one. A high level of competition can produce some of the very best news coverage. But many of those concerned with violence against journalists warn that this is one area where the companies—and individuals—should move away from their independent, competitive ways and work together.

Richard Tait made this point in his 2001 article. “I believe we need to increase political pressure on undemocratic governments to protect news teams as a responsibility that they must take seriously,” he wrote. “We must hold them accountable for abuses.”⁷²

And his industry has the power to do that, he added. “The development of powerful corporate media groups, which

do have real global influence, gives us the opportunity to use that influence for good. Safety is everyone’s concern, from the newsroom to the boardroom and the governments of the world.”

The Qatar-based television network al-Jazeera makes the principle of solidarity an explicit part of its code of ethics, calling on staff to meet this standard:

“Stand by colleagues in the profession and offer them support when required, particularly in light of the acts of aggression and harassment to which journalists are subjected at times.

Cooperate with Arab and international journalistic unions and associations to defend freedom of the press.”⁷³

Al-Jazeera put that principle into practice, for instance, when two employees of Fox News, the American network, were kidnapped in Gaza

in 2006. In a statement citing its code of ethics, the company noted “its rejection of attacks of any kind on journalists from any organization,” and called for “the immediate release of the two kidnapped colleagues.”⁷⁴

Solidarity is not always easy, or successful. The Austin conference on press freedom issues in Latin America found “low levels of solidarity among journalists, especially in high-risk zones,” pointing in particular to problems in Mexico.

“I believe we need to increase political pressure on undemocratic governments to protect news teams as a responsibility that they must take seriously ... We must hold them accountable for abuses.”

— Richard Tait, former editor in chief of Independent Television News

There, one participant said, although newspapers had agreed to publish joint investigations on drug trafficking, the agreement foundered because editors could not agree on publication dates.⁷⁵

A year later, in October 2008, INSI and the freedom of expression organization Article 19 tackled that problem in a Mexico City conference of 140 journalists, media workers, trade unions and NGOs from 14 Latin American countries addressing issues of safety, journalists' rights, working in high-risk environments, and media solidarity, among other topics. Particularly important, said INSI director Pinder, was that news media executives were part of the conference—because their commitment is essential to safety efforts. “It is time for journalist organizations, media owners and directors to assume their role in demanding the level of safety needed to truly exercise press freedom,” said Dario Ramirez, Article 19’s Mexico and Central America director, in a statement. “The core demands have to come from within.”⁷⁶

Write about it. Reporting and writing about big problems is, after all, the work of journalists. They can find it awkward, though, when it involves other journalists. That is unfortunate, say some of the people most concerned about violent attacks.

“It is time for journalist organizations, media owners and directors to assume their role in demanding the level of safety needed to truly exercise press freedom ... The core demands have to come from within.”

— Dario Ramirez, Article 19’s Mexico and Central America director

“Journalists who live in places where institutions are stronger must get involved in the defense of journalists working in high-risk areas,” participants at the Austin conference argued, using Mexico City as an example. But they also suggested that this should apply to the southern United States, because of all the cross-border aspects of the drug trade, and that journalists there should “find ways to support each other and collaborate on information gathering and preparing articles.”⁷⁷

Some large international media organizations do cover attacks on journalists on a regular basis. In October 2009, for example, the *New York Times* published a lengthy article about Iranian journalists fleeing that country, including a report about imprisonment and possible torture of journalists. (The author of the article noted that she was one of those journalists who had fled, “because she felt her safety was threatened.”)⁷⁸

But much rarer are articles presenting a worldwide context to the issue and implications of attacks on journalism. Dudge, of the IPI, would like to see that happening a lot more—but ruefully acknowledged that this may not happen.

“Journalists don’t like reporting about themselves,” he said. “They never seem to be able to go out and make the case that the

murder of a journalist has the most impact on public access to information.”⁷⁹

Armao is one of several observers who point to the Arizona Project as a potential model. The 1977 project, organized by the organization Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), was a reaction to the murder, the year before, of Don Bolles, a founding member of IRE, who had been reporting a story on organized crime and land fraud for the *Arizona Republic*.

IRE responded with a call to its members. “Thirty-eight journalists from 28 newspapers and television stations across the country descended on Arizona,” according to IRE’s account. Their purpose was not to find Bolles’s killers. Instead, “they were out to show organized crime leaders that killing a journalist would not stop reportage about them; it would increase it 100-fold.”⁸⁰

Some journalists, IRE acknowledged, “disliked the idea of reporters on a crusade,” and major news organizations such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* refused to participate. But the 23-part investigative series that resulted was published in numerous papers around the country, and won national journalism prizes.

Armao said the Arizona Project could be a model in the case of journalists killed in other parts of the world, for teams of journalists to carry on their work, in the process making a point to the killers. As effective as it could be, she added, she does not really expect it to happen. “It’s just very hard, and it takes money.”⁸¹

Edik Baghdasaryan, the Armenian reporter who was brutally beaten, would take it a step further. “I thought about this when last year

my colleague was killed in Moscow,” he said. “I thought that we should have a team of journalists, which will investigate any such case and the reason of investigation will be published in several top newspapers in all over the world in the same time: but this is utopia for now. It’s hard to implement.”⁸²

There have been some efforts along these lines. One took place in Colombia after the 1986 murder of Guillermo Cano, editor of the newspaper *El Espectador*, who had waged an aggressive (and, some said, foolhardy) campaign against the drug cartels that were acting with virtual impunity in his country. He was killed by men hired by Medellin Cartel boss Pablo Escobar.⁸³

His murder shocked the Colombian news media and prompted at least a short-term reaction. News organizations shut down for 24 hours in protest of the killing and then, in February 1987, most media in the country reprinted a *Miami Herald* investigative series on the Colombian drug trade. In the ensuing months, according to an article in Florida’s *St. Petersburg Times*, most of the country’s media outlets also simultaneously published or broadcast the work of local journalists on drug topics.⁸⁴ The journalists’ work did not stop the bloodbath for their colleagues in Colombia, where, IPI notes, more than 100 journalists have been killed, but it provided a demonstration that some of them, at least, would not be silenced. Sometimes, journalists respond by taking on the role of investigating their colleagues’ murders themselves. IAPA’s “Rapid Response Unit,” for instance, has sent reporters out to investigate the killings of journalists.⁸⁵ And after the 2004 Moscow murder of Paul Klebnikov, an American of Russian descent who was the founding editor of *Forbes Russia*, a group of investigative

journalists teamed up in “Project Klebnikov,” with the goal of helping to solve the murder.⁸⁶

Governments and multilaterals: A meaningful role?

There is certainly no shortage of strongly worded international condemnations of attacks on journalists. UNESCO has made them. OSCE has made them. Western governments, including the United States, have regularly made them.

But do those statements make any difference? And could those international bodies be doing more?

“I don’t think intergovernmental organizations do a very good job,” said Dadge. The problem, he claimed, is that the countries with the biggest issues do not necessarily care what someone in UNESCO says about them.⁸⁷

As INSI summarizes in *Killing the Messenger*: “Where a country’s legal framework is deficient, or where the government in question does not fully implement that framework, there is, above the level of bilateral foreign policy, limited scope for international law to play a part in pressing for greater protection for media workers.”⁸⁸ So what about “bilateral foreign policy”? Many press freedom advocates have argued that it is altogether appropriate for Western governments to use their millions of dollars of foreign aid as leverage to pressure the recipient countries to reduce impunity and otherwise act to protect journalists’ safety more effectively.

Simon believes it would be “crazy” for donor governments not to consider this. “Not direct linkages, maybe, but try to assess the press freedom environment,” he said.

“It’s got to be one of the factors. It’s not uniformly embraced in the bureaucracy, but increasingly, it’s being recognized as one of the factors to be considered.”⁸⁹

Pinder is not as optimistic about the possibility of getting donor governments and institutions to factor attacks on journalists into their foreign aid decisions. “I don’t see any movement on that whatsoever,” he said. “There’s still such a long way to go. The safety of journalists is still so far down the list of priorities. That’s a long haul, really.”⁹⁰

In the United States, legislation pending before Congress would take at least a first step toward connecting aid more closely to issues of journalists’ safety.

The *Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act of 2009*, passed by the House on December 16, 2009, and pending before the Senate, would require the Department of State to include additional information about press freedom in its annual country-by-country human rights reports. This would include identifying countries where there were physical attacks against journalists, whether the governments had participated in or condoned them, and what had been done “to ensure the prosecution of those individuals who attack or murder journalists.”⁹¹ The measure, introduced in the Senate by Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and in the House by Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Mike Pence (R-IN), does not require any specific funding action by the State Department, and its passage is uncertain. But, Schiff said, it “would shine a spotlight on those countries in which journalists are killed, imprisoned, kidnapped, threatened, or censored, and let them know that the United States Government, the American people, and the world care deeply about press freedom.” And

he said a “new emphasis” on press freedom issues that the bill would require in State Department reports “would help us make better informed foreign policy decisions.”⁹²

The State Department, for its part, says it is already “deeply concerned about violence against journalists,” tracking it and including it in its human rights reports. “When violence is perpetrated against journalists, we raise our concerns with host governments privately and publicly, directly and within the context of multilateral organizations,” according to a statement provided by the State Department for this report.⁹³

And, said the statement, media issues can also influence aid decisions. For example, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. government-funded foreign aid agency, has continued a hold on part of its funding for Armenia “due to concerns over the status of democratic governance, including constraints on media freedom.”

Other countries have certainly thought about the leverage question.

Thomas Hughes is the deputy director of International Media Support (IMS), a Copenhagen-based NGO funded through the foreign aid divisions of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, as well as some foundations. “We of course do believe that

foreign development assistance should be tied to a country’s governance and human rights record, with a specific focus on freedom of expression and press freedoms,” he said. “I think many donors now give more recognition to this, although practice sometimes falls short of principle.”⁹⁴

It is perhaps another question whether using donor aid as leverage is an effective strategy.

“There is clearly a matter of principle,” said Hughes, “which is whether human rights-violating governments should be bolstered by grants or development aid. However,

the counter side is clearly that to remove such assistance often impacts more on the public than it does the leadership.” An alternative route, he suggested, is to channel aid not through governments but through NGOs and other independent bodies.

What governments and international multilateral

bodies can pursue, he noted, is targeted sanctions against these countries, although he noted that “based on the realities of the impact of previous such sanctions, it would be naive to expect such measures to produce quick results.”

A case study is playing out now in Europe, where the European Union is negotiating with Belarus over whether to remove certain human rights-based sanctions. “The EU has linked human rights (and

“When violence is perpetrated against journalists, we raise our concerns with host governments privately and publicly, directly and within the context of multilateral organizations,”

— Statement by the United States Department of State, October 23, 2009

specifically press freedom issues) with the lifting of sanctions,” Hughes said. “However, to what degree the EU will hold its ground on these issues, we wait to see.”

In an effort to encourage the EU, an international group of press freedom advocates conducted a mission in Belarus in September 2009 to put a spotlight on these issues during the negotiations.

The group—representing 13 organizations, including IMS, IFJ, IPI, RSF and others—concluded: “Despite some symbolic and isolated gestures on the part of the authorities, Belarus continues to fall short of meeting international free media standards, and authorities still make use of a number of repressive provisions that can be used to silence critical, oppositional or alternative voices.”⁹⁵

Fatima Tlisova, a 2008-09 Nieman fellow at Harvard University, is an investigative reporter from Russia’s North Caucasus region, where she was editor in chief of the Regnum News Agency. At CIMA’s World Press Freedom Day event on Capitol Hill in April 2009, she talked about why she hopes Western governments will be willing to take a tough line.

“Every time when the next tolerant Western statement is made, those people, including journalists, feel abandoned and betrayed,” Tlisova said. “From their point of view the so-called neutrality or simple silence means support for the violent offensive on rights and freedoms. The consequences of this tolerance can bring the world to the point when the great value of freedom and democracy will become worthless not only in the countries like Russia but in the West as well.”⁹⁶

Conclusion and Recommendations

For all the strong, intelligent, aggressive work in defense of threatened journalists, a troubling feeling remains.

Perhaps it is encapsulated in a comment by Dadge, IPI’s director and a veteran of these wars, when he was asked: Can you point to a place you have seen hopeful signs of success in combating the problem of violence against journalists?

After a pause and a sigh, he said, “It is very difficult,” he said. There are so many causes of these attacks, so many different issues.⁹⁷

Of course, IPI’s efforts show that Dadge has not let the sheer difficulty of the task put him off from at least trying to make things better. And at CPJ, Simon maintains his confidence in the impact of his group’s aggressive work. A team from CPJ was in Moscow recently, he said, and was granted a meeting with an investigative team looking into the murders of journalists in Russia. It was a sometimes testy exchange, he said, but at least the meeting took place—and the CPJ representatives were given an assurance of a follow-up in a year.

“It’s not like this kind of culture changes overnight,” said Simon. “It takes advocacy, and a little bit of luck.”⁹⁸

There is plentiful evidence, both in common sense and in documented effect, that a culture of violence against journalists will diminish the overall quality of journalism.

But advocacy and luck have not yet proven widely successful in reducing the problem. As Pinder of INSI put it: “I started off with an attitude that my god, this is so obvious. One of the great disappointments is that despite the amount of progress we have made—the amount of progress we have not made.”⁹⁹

There is plentiful evidence, both in common sense and in documented effect, that a culture of violence against journalists will diminish the overall quality of journalism. Sometimes that will be, literally, through the killing of the messenger. Other times

it will be in the widely observed self-censorship that follows in the wake of killings and beatings.

Either way, it will inevitably mean fewer stories about those who are preying on societies that are on the dangerous road toward democratization.

Another CIMA report has pointed both to the “considerable evidence that development of media can help foster democracy,” and to the “significant resource shortfalls in this area” at the two U.S. government agencies most involved with media assistance.¹⁰⁰ In this context, more concerted, better-supported efforts that could finally have a significant impact on attacks on journalists around the world should be a high priority both for advocacy groups and funding organizations. Everyone

agrees this is an extraordinary problem, at the top of their list of concerns. That means it requires extraordinary efforts to address.

The recommendations below offer some avenues to consider.

- ▶ **To begin: Get the facts, and get them as straight as possible.** There must be one centralized, consistent, and regularly updated tally of deaths of journalists, with subsidiary tallies of beatings and other attacks, acknowledging the difficulties of full counts in these cases. Currently, five organizations produce five dramatically different counts. They should cooperate on creating a single reporting structure. The logical home for a centralized tally would be INSI, but it should employ the robust and useful database format CPJ uses. A representative body from the press freedom organizations should settle on the most useful parameters (Should the tally include purely accidental deaths that could have happened anywhere? Should it include violent deaths that may or may not have been related to the journalists work?), make those clear in the presentation, and provide for sortable data fields allowing customization of the information for different purposes.

There must be one centralized, consistent, and regularly updated tally of deaths of journalists, with subsidiary tallies of beatings and other attacks, acknowledging the difficulties of full counts in these cases.

Creating this centralized tally could free up resources from all the different groups now doing it on their own, but more important, it will give the public—and especially, multilaterals and donor groups—far more confidence that they are seeing the true scope of the problem.

- ▶ **More targeted coordination of efforts by international organizations.** Simon of CPJ is right that it can be effective to have a multitude of groups all hammering on an issue with foreign governments. But his instincts are also right in talking about an “impunity summit” of the major groups. Certain aspects of journalists’ safety are so difficult, and will require so much muscle—in investigation, in lobbying, in brain power—that lasting solutions are unlikely without the critical mass of truly coordinated work.

Harold Evans had it right: “I am not suggesting that press bodies ... subordinate their activities, still less stop them ... I just think [more coordination] might help to set priorities and keep a relentless focus on measures that will make a real difference.”¹⁰¹

“Relentless focus”: that’s what is needed if this problem is to be reduced.

- ▶ **Pilot project of independent investigation.** An approach like the Arizona Project would be hard, and it would certainly cost money. But one of the most effective ways to bring pressure on the “impunity countries” would be to publicize their failures in the international arena. Media organizations have showed they can work together on safety standards. Perhaps they can also work together on coverage—for example, focusing attention on some of the most egregious cases of impunity through independent investigative reporting.

Just as IRE coordinated the Arizona Project, any number of organizations—IRE itself, one of the international investigative reporting organizations, or one or more of the press freedom groups—could identify likely cases to investigate for the greatest impact, and establish a working team of local and experienced foreign investigative reporters, with a commitment to publish and broadcast results in high-profile ways. Funding could likely be available from major media development NGOs for the right approach.

There will surely be barriers—logistical, ethical, financial. But there is great potential gain as well, and a truly international pilot project would be worth consideration at an “impunity summit,” if that takes place.

- ▶ **Toughening the policy approach.** Press freedom is not simply a matter of a “special interest” supported

by a few advocacy groups. It is critical to the policy priorities of aid-granting governments, and they must be more creative in finding ways to demand that press freedom be improved around the world.

As Hughes of IMS politely put it, “practice sometimes falls short of principle” when it comes to governments taking account of press freedom when making aid decisions. And he is also correct that withholding aid likely will not be productive, and that sanctions have their own issues. But he properly notes that there are ways around these problems.

If it is useful to have an “impunity index” spotlighting governments that do not investigate murders of journalists, what about a “lip-service index” to spotlight donor governments or multilaterals that take no meaningful action to call those impunity governments to task? And editorializing to this effect by major news organizations who understand these issues firsthand would not be out of place.

- ▶ **Training: Broaden it, and fund it better.** After an initial period when much of the safety training effort focused on war situations, particularly for foreign correspondents, the work is properly evolving to focus more on training local journalists, many of them freelancers, to more safely cover purely local news that happens to be extremely dangerous. But international media organizations,

which have been the major funders of the war-related training, are far less likely to support training of local journalists, leaving a serious funding question. This is a particularly serious issue for freelancers, since a five-day security training program can cost more than \$2,000. The Rory Peck Trust, established in honor of a freelance cameraman killed in Moscow in 1995, offers a limited number of grants to help freelancers with the costs, but that can do no more than make a small dent in the need.¹⁰²

INSI says it has proposed a five-year program that would establish a strong foundation for this sort of training, designed to be self-sustainable by training trainers in target countries, for a cost of about \$22 million. That is not a lot of money in the world of media development funding. The INSI program deserves a high-priority review by funding groups, including both governmental and nongovernmental bodies. If it is indeed well-constructed, it deserves funding action. If it has flaws, they should be pointed out, and resolved.

Meanwhile, Sullivan and others are also correct when they say that true improvements in journalists' safety will come from better newsroom practices. Too many training programs are aimed just at reporters, not at their editors, and too many of them, as Simon pointed out, fail to include advice on how to carry out all this noble-sounding journalism in dangerous situations. If media

development NGOs, government agencies, and multilaterals want to have a lasting impact on the work these journalists do, they should encourage training that strengthens newsroom structures and practices from the perspective of safety in covering dangerous stories.

The journalists who carry on despite violent attacks deserve no less than the well-calibrated, coordinated, and aggressive support of anyone who believes in the cause of press freedom.

Baghdasaryan, the Armenian editor and investigative reporter who knows about violence against journalists from the impact of the stones on his head, also has a deep understanding of the ripple effects it can cause.

“My sons and wife were hugely afraid for me and my health. My mother is ill, she has heart problems and she worried for me; my sisters and relatives, friends and colleagues—everyone was shocked. All of them worry, and all of them ask me not to put my nose to ‘dirty and dangerous things,’” he said.¹⁰³

“I believe that such violence cases are a matter of thoughts not only for my colleagues, but also for my students: whether they should go forward to this kind of dangers.”

For himself and his staff, Baghdasaryan concluded, it is “another case”:

“We work neither for government, nor for opposition. We are such kind of ‘rara avis,’ working for people.”

Appendix: Major International Organizations

This is a brief guide to the major international press freedom advocacy groups that concern themselves, in some fashion, with the issue of violent attacks on journalists:

Article 19 (also known as Article XIX). Based in London. “We take our name from article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states: ‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’ Article 19 monitors, researches, publishes, lobbies, campaigns, sets standards and litigates on behalf of freedom of expression wherever it is threatened.” <http://www.article19.org/index.html>

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Based in New York. Founded in 1981 by U.S. foreign correspondents concerned about “the often brutal way” local journalists were being treated in other countries. Managed by a board of directors made up of professional journalists, CPJ produces annual country reports, conducts international missions, and maintains its Impunity Index, among many other aggressive activities. <http://www.cpj.org>

Inter American Press Association (IAPA). Based in Miami, Florida. Founded in the late 1940s; now includes 1,400 member publications from Canada to Chile. Monitors and advocates for press freedom throughout the hemisphere; special programs include

a Rapid Response Unit deployed when a journalist is killed, twice-yearly reports on press freedom issues in each country, and publication of a “Risk Map” to guide journalists working in the most dangerous countries. IAPA also operates its own separate and extremely thorough “Crimes Against Journalists, Impunity Project,” with detailed information on murders of journalists throughout the region. <http://www.sipiapa.com/v4/index.php?idioma=us>

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Based in Brussels, Belgium. Launched, in its modern form, in 1952, IFJ describes itself as the world’s largest association of journalists, and says it “speaks for journalists within the United Nations system and within the international trade union movement.” Monitors press freedom issues and advocates for journalists’ safety; was a founder of the International News Safety Institute. IFJ publishes numerous reports on specific countries or broad journalistic issues. <http://www.ifj.org/en>

International Freedom of Information eXchange (IFEX). Perhaps the most visible role of this Toronto-based organization is as a source of information; it operates what it calls “the world’s most comprehensive free expression information service,” with a weekly e-mail newsletter, a regular digest of articles related to press freedom, and “action alerts” from members around the globe, some of which have “caused governments to back down from introducing repressive legislation and ... helped free journalists, writers and free expression advocates from detention, or even helped save their lives.” It

has more than 80 member organizations in more than 50 countries. <http://www.ifex.org>

International News Safety Institute

(INSI). Based in Brussels, Belgium. Created in 2003 as a result of an initiative by the IFJ and IPI, it describes itself as “a unique coalition of news organizations, journalist support groups and individuals exclusively dedicated to the safety of news media staff working in dangerous environments.” It conducts training, issues safety tips and manuals, and monitors journalists’ casualties of all kinds, whether violent attacks or accidents. <http://www.newssafety.org>

International Press Institute (IPI).

Created in 1950 in New York by a group of 34 editors and now based in Vienna, Austria; self-described as “a global network of editors, media executives and leading journalists ... dedicated to the furtherance and safeguarding of press freedom, the protection of freedom of opinion and expression, the promotion of the free flow of news and information, and the improvement of the practices of journalism.” One of the founders of INSI; monitors press freedom with an annual World Press Freedom Review and conducts regular

missions to countries where it is at risk, tracks attacks on journalists and issues of impunity, etc. <http://www.freemedia.at>

Reporters Without Borders (known as RSF—*Reporters Sans Frontières*).

Founded in 1985 and based in Paris, France, RSF gathers information on press freedom violations and sponsors international missions as needed. Among other activities it provides financial assistance to journalists or news organizations to help defend themselves, and to the families of imprisoned journalists, and generally works to improve the safety of journalists, especially in war zones. <http://www.rsf.org/-Anglais-.html>

World Association of Newspapers

(WAN). Founded in 1948 and based in Paris, France, WAN represents more than 18,000 publications on the five continents. In addition to providing support and information on basic industry issues, WAN has a special focus on press freedom, monitoring attacks on journalists, and “conducts long-term campaigns and targeted events with the aim to raise public awareness about critical press freedom matters.” <http://www.wan-ifra.org>

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¹³ INSI’s figure covers January 1, 1996 through June 30, 2006; this statistic and all following INSI statistics in this section come from *Killing the Messenger*, 56-69.

¹⁴ For complete statistics on Iraq deaths, see the Iraq page of CPJ’s journalists’ deaths database, <http://www.cpj.org/killed/mideast/iraq/>.

¹⁵ Ricardo Trotti, *Risk Map for Journalists*, Inter American Press Association (IAPA), 2006, <http://www.centrodepublicaciones.com/index.php?showlibro=132>, 20.

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- ¹⁸ Edik Baghdasaryan (editor in chief, *Hetq Online*), in e-mail to the author, October 1, 2009.
- ¹⁹ INSI, *Killing the Messenger*, 14.
- ²⁰ Sarah Grainger (reporter, Reuters), in telephone interview with author, Guatemala City, Guatemala, September 23, 2009.
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