

 **JOURNALISTS KILLED** in 2005

CPJ research indicates that the following individuals have been killed in 2004 because of their work as journalists. They either died in the line of duty or were deliberately targeted for assassination because of their reporting or their affiliation with a news organization.

See our list of pending investigations into suspicious deaths, called [Killed: Motive Unconfirmed](#).

See the list of [Journalists Who Disappeared](#). See the list of [Media Workers Killed in 2004](#).

CONFIRMED: 47

AZERBAIJAN: 1

Elmar Huseynov, *Monitor*, March 2, Baku

Huseynov, founder and editor of the opposition weekly news magazine *Monitor*, was gunned down in his apartment building in the capital, Baku.

Huseynov was shot several times while walking up the stairwell of his building on his way home from work, according to local reports. The shooting occurred at approximately 9 p.m., and the editor died at the scene, the Baku-based independent news agency Turan reported.

The attack appears to have been well-planned. Chingiz Sultansoy, deputy director of the Baku Press Club, told CPJ in a telephone interview that a light at the entrance of the apartment building was not working, and that several telephones in the area had been disconnected at the time of the shooting.

Huseynov's family said the editor had received several threats and was concerned about his security, Sultansoy said. Eynulla Fatullayev, an investigative reporter with *Monitor*, told CPJ he believes that Huseynov's murder was related to his work.

Monitor has long angered officials with its hard-hitting commentary. The magazine has been targeted with several lawsuits in retaliation for its critical reporting, and journalists working for the publication have faced a steady stream of harassment from government officials.

In April, the National Security Ministry identified several ethnic Azerbaijanis living in neighboring Georgia as suspects, but the ministry did not describe any motive or provide any evidence linking them to the crime. Georgian authorities refused to extradite the suspects due to the lack of evidence. Huseynov's family and colleagues criticized authorities for not looking into work-related motives.

BANGLADESH: 2

Sheikh Belaluddin, *Sangram*, February 11, Khulna

Belaluddin, a correspondent with the conservative Bengali daily *Sangram*, died of injuries

sustained in a bomb attack six days earlier. The device exploded at around 9:15 p.m. outside the press club in the southwestern city of Khulna. The bomb, hidden in a bag hanging from a motorcycle, detonated as Belaluddin approached the vehicle.

Three other journalists were hurt, but their injuries were not life-threatening. On February 8, three days after the blast, Khulna journalists observed a news blackout and formed a human chain at the press club to protest the bombing. Across the country, journalists took to the streets to condemn the attack, demanding that authorities find and punish those responsible.

After Belaluddin died, editors from across the political spectrum formed a group called the Forum to Protect Journalists. The group rallied in the capital, marched to the National Press Club, and called for justice in the murders of journalists.

In July, a former leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir, the Islamic fundamentalist political party Jamaat-i-Islami's student wing, confessed to taking part in the deadly bombing. Just three weeks later, though, the suspect was freed on bail.

Gautam Das, *Samakal*, November 17, Faridpur

Das, a reporter for the Dhaka-based daily *Samakal*, was found strangled in his bureau office in the town of Faridpur, 40 miles (64 kilometers) west of the Bangladeshi capital, according to news reports.

A colleague called police after repeated telephone calls to Das went unanswered and the door of the *Samakal* bureau in Faridpur remained locked at midday, according to the local advocacy group Media Watch. At 2 p.m., police broke down the door of the office to find Das' body inside, with fractures to the legs and hand and nylon rope around his neck, according to a statement by the group.

Although colleagues were not aware of any specific threat against the reporter, they said that Das had recently written about sensitive topics such as the activities of Islamic militant groups, according to Media Watch. Sumi Khan, a reporter for *Samakal*, said that Das was known for his reporting on crime and corruption, including coverage of illegal activities by members of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The Associated Press reported that Das had recently written about local government officials accused of taking bribes in exchange for construction contract awards.

Two days later, journalist groups around the country protested the killing and criticized the government for not doing more to protect the press.

On November 19, police arrested Tamjid Hossain Babu, the son of a local MP, in connection with Das' murder, according to *The Daily Star*. Local journalists said police arrested three other suspects.

COLOMBIA: 1

Julio Hernando Palacios Sánchez, Radio Lemas, January 11, Cúcuta

Two armed motorcyclists shot Palacios, 55, a veteran radio news host, as he drove to work around 5:30 a.m. in the city of Cúcuta, in the unstable northeastern region near the

Venezuelan border. Palacios, who hosted the morning program "Radio Periódico El Viento" on Radio Lemas, was shot three times in the chest, said the local police chief, Col. José Humberto Henao.

Despite his wounds, Palacios drove back home and his family took him to a local hospital. He died two hours after arriving at San José Hospital in Cúcuta, Henao told CPJ. He did not speculate about a motive. Local police offered a reward for information leading to the capture of the gunmen.

Palacios was a controversial and outspoken journalist who devoted a segment of his program to denouncing local corruption, sources told CPJ. Local journalists said that Palacios had made enemies because of his tough talk against corruption; they said they believed the murder was connected to his work.

Palacios received anonymous threats in October 2004, sources told CPJ. The Cúcuta-based daily *La Opinión* said local police gave Palacios a security manual and suggested he change his daily routine.

He survived an attack nine years earlier when assailants hurled a grenade into his office that failed to explode, The Associated Press reported. Palacios was a political conservative known for supporting President Álvaro Uribe.

ECUADOR: 1

Julio Augusto García Romero, La Bocina and Punto de Vista, April 19, Quito

Photographer García Romero died after inhaling tear gas while covering a demonstration against then-President Lucio Gutiérrez. Protesters were moving toward the Palacio de Carondelet, the seat of the executive branch, when police fired water cannons and tear gas grenades into the crowd.

The Chilean-born García Romero, 58, was taking photographs when he collapsed, the Guayaquil-based daily *El Universo* reported. He was taken to Red Cross headquarters in Quito, where he arrived with symptoms of asphyxia. Later, he suffered cardiorespiratory arrest and was transferred to a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead, according to Jonny Franco, spokesman for the Ecuadoran Red Cross.

García Romero worked for the small Chilean news agency La Bocina, *El Universo* said. Local sources told CPJ he also worked for the weekly *Punto de Vista*. He lived in Ecuador for about 20 years.

Protests in Ecuador increased in frequency after April 1, when Supreme Court magistrates—appointed by Gutiérrez and his allies in Congress—dismissed corruption charges against two former presidents and a former vice president. Gutiérrez was later forced from office and faced prosecution himself.

HAITI: 1

Robenson Laraque, Tele Contact, April 4, Petit-Goâve

Laraque, a reporter with the private radio station Tele Contact, died in a Cuban hospital from injuries suffered while covering a March 20 clash between U.N. troops and members of the disbanded Haitian military in the city of Petit-Goâve. The confrontation began after the ex-soldiers occupied the police station in the southwestern city. The Associated Press reported that three people, including a Sri Lankan peacekeeper, died in the gun battle.

Laraque and several colleagues were on the nearby balcony of Tele Contact's offices, when the journalist was struck by two shots to the head and neck, the AP said. Laraque was taken to a hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, where he received initial care. The injuries were so severe that he was transferred to Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic, and later to Cuba.

Wilner Saint-Preux, a journalist for Tele Contact, told CPJ that Laraque and other station reporters were trying to cover the skirmish. Witnesses reported that the shots appeared to have been fired by U.N. peacekeepers, Saint-Preux said. Fritz Ariel Nelson, a Tele Contact editor, said witnesses reported that Laraque was holding a microphone at the time.

David Beer, the U.N. civilian police commissioner in Haiti, told CPJ that the shooting was under investigation. "We take this very seriously," he said in an interview shortly after the journalist's death. "We are trying to determine what happened and which side the bullet came from."

Col. El Ouafi Boulbars, spokesman for the U.N. forces in Haiti, told CPJ in late October that the inquiry was continuing.

The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti operates under a U.N. mandate that grants it the authority to "ensure a secure and stable environment within which the constitutional and political process in Haiti can take place" and to "protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence."

IRAQ: 22

Raeda Wazzan, Al-Iraqiya, February 25, Mosul

Wazzan, a news anchor with the Iraqi state TV channel Al-Iraqiya who was kidnapped on February 20, was found dead five days later on a roadside in Mosul, where the journalist had lived and worked, according to press reports citing her husband. She had been shot in the head repeatedly. Gunmen had also kidnapped Wazzan's 10-year-old son, but he was released days later.

Wazzan's husband said that his wife had received several death threats with demands that she quit her job, The Associated Press reported. The station, funded by the Iraqi government, also came under mortar attack the previous week, injuring three technicians, according to press reports. The AP reported that al-Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq claimed responsibility for the attacks in Internet postings, but those claims could not be independently verified.

Hussam Sarsam, Kurdistan TV, March 14, Mosul

Sarsam, a cameraman working with Kurdistan TV, a station affiliated with the Kurdistan Democratic Party, was kidnapped and shot by suspected insurgents.

Sarsam was abducted on March 13 in front of Mosul University. The following day his captors returned him to the same location, where they killed him in front of a number of pedestrians, several Iraqi sources told CPJ.

Colleagues and a family member said burn marks were found on Sarsam's upper body, an indication of possible torture. The family member told CPJ that the cameraman's Kurdistan TV identification cards and a media card issued by U.S.-backed coalition forces were placed on his corpse by his killers.

Sarsam had worked with Kurdistan TV since January 2004. CPJ sources said Sarsam had videotaped confessions of insurgents held by Iraqi police in Mosul that were aired on a program on Kurdistan TV called "Al-Irhab ala Haqiateh" (Terrorism Exposed). His colleagues and a family member suspected his murderers were motivated by his filming of the detainee confessions.

Ahmed Jabbar Hashim, *Al-Sabah*, April 1, Baghdad

Hashim, a reporter working for the Baghdad-based daily *Al-Sabah*, part of the U.S.-backed Iraq Media Network, was kidnapped on March 25 by an unidentified armed group. His decapitated body was discovered on April 1.

Mohammad Abdul Jabbar, editor-in-chief of the newspaper, told CPJ that he didn't know the precise reason for the kidnapping and murder. However, insurgents have frequently targeted journalists working for U.S.-backed news outlets in Iraq. Some journalists familiar with the case told CPJ that Hashim might have been killed because he had also done work for U.S. media. Eight armed men in three cars ambushed the journalist while he was taking his daily route home. They decapitated him and sent a recording of the killing to *Al-Sabah* as a warning.

Fadhil Hazem Fadhil, *Al-Hurriya*, April 14, Baghdad

Ali Ibrahim Issa, *Al-Hurriya*, April 14, Baghdad

The two *Al-Hurriya* television journalists were killed in twin suicide bombings while on their way to an assignment. The station's Baghdad director, Nawrooz Mohamed, told CPJ that producer Fadhil and cameraman Issa were en route to an event honoring the new president, Jalal Talabani.

Mohamed told CPJ that the journalists were traveling in a car with a reporter and a driver when the bombs exploded outside the Interior Ministry. The reporter and driver were injured, he said.

Mohamed said that the journalists were not targets of the attacks, which The Associated Press said took the lives of at least 18 people.

Saman Abdullah Izzedine, *Kirkuk TV*, April 15, Kirkuk

Unidentified assailants gunned down Izzedine, a news anchor for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan-backed *Kirkuk TV* as he was driving on the main highway from Kirkuk to Baghdad. Kurdish journalists in Kirkuk said that Izzedine's car was fired on by a group of armed men driving in a black Nissan. After Izzedine was shot, his attackers threw his body

onto the road and left the scene, the journalists reported.

Kurdish journalists said Kirkuk TV's anti-insurgent stance has made it vulnerable to attack from armed groups, and they believe Izzedine, a prominent personality on Kirkuk TV, was targeted for his work with the station.

Ahmed al-Rubai'i, *Al-Sabah*, mid-April, Baghdad

Al-Rubai'i, a reporter and editor at the U.S.-backed daily *Al-Sabah* who also worked in the media department of the Iraqi National Assembly, was abducted and apparently murdered by unknown perpetrators in Baghdad. The circumstances of his abduction and apparent murder are not clear. No body was found.

Iraqi officials told the journalist's family that al-Rubai'i had been murdered, colleagues said. *The Washington Post* reported on June 6 that "police arrested several members of a criminal gang who admitted to killing several people. Rubai'i's press pass was found among the identity cards in their possession." *The Post* said the detainees told Iraqi police that al-Rubai'i had been beheaded, although his body was not recovered. CPJ could not corroborate this account.

The Iraqi National Guard and Interior Ministry told *Al-Sabah* staffers that the perpetrators belonged to the militant group Tawhid and Jihad, and they killed al-Rubai'i because he was a "traitor." Al-Rubai'i worked as a reporter for *Al-Sabah*. He took a second job as a media officer for the National Assembly five months before his death, staff said.

Saleh Ibrahim, Associated Press Television News, April 23, Mosul

Ibrahim was killed by gunfire near the city's al-Yarmouk Circle, the scene of an earlier explosion that he and his brother-in-law, AP photographer Mohamed Ibrahim, had gone to cover, according to The Associated Press.

A journalist at the scene, whose name was withheld, told the AP that the Ibrahims had arrived at the scene together after the 2:30 p.m. blast and that U.S. forces were in the area. The journalist told the AP that gunfire broke out and both men were struck, although the report did not indicate who fired on them.

Saleh Ibrahim was taken to a local hospital, where he died shortly after arrival. Mohamed Ibrahim, treated for shrapnel wounds, was detained at the hospital by U.S. troops and released the following day. The AP, citing Mosul's deputy police chief, said a U.S. patrol was the target of the earlier explosion.

Ahmed Adam, *Al-Mada*, May 15, Latifiyah Najem Abed Khudair, *Al-Mada*, May 15, Latifiyah

Adam and Khudair, reporters with the private Iraqi newspaper *Al-Mada*, were murdered on a road in Latifiyah, a town about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of Baghdad after leaving the office of their newspaper in Baghdad.

A colleague told CPJ that they were killed after meeting with newspaper staff in Baghdad and getting assignments for the week. The journalists were on the way home to Karbala, their

hometown, when armed men ambushed their car. The colleague told CPJ that the journalists' throats were slit and their bodies were left on the side of the road. At least four other journalists were killed after being ambushed on roads in the area south of Baghdad. Initial press reports said that the journalists were traveling with a driver, who was also killed.

Jerges Mahmood Mohamad Suleiman, Nineveh TV, May 31, Mosul

Suleiman, a news anchor at Nineveh TV, was shot by unidentified assailants in late May. Nineveh TV is part of the U.S.-backed Iraqi Media Network. The Associated Press said the shooting occurred on May 31.

Co-workers said Suleiman worked for the station for just 20 days before he was killed. He was shot as he approached Nineveh TV's offices, about 220 yards (200 meters) from the building. Colleagues said Suleiman had not received any prior threats, but they suspect he was targeted because he was an employee of Nineveh TV. Insurgents have frequently targeted Nineveh TV's offices with gunfire and mortars.

Maha Ibrahim, Baghdad TV, June 25, Baghdad

Ibrahim, a news producer for the Iraqi television station Baghdad TV, was shot by U.S. forces as she drove to work with her husband, who was a fellow employee, Iraqi journalists and colleagues at Baghdad TV told CPJ.

Staff at the Baghdad TV station said Ibrahim's car was hit as U.S. troops attempted to disperse a crowd from a Baghdad road. They said Ibrahim was wounded in the abdomen and that she died on arrival at a local hospital. Ibrahim's husband survived the shooting. Baghdad TV is a local television station affiliated with the Iraqi Islamic Party.

Ahmed Wael Bakri, Al-Sharqiyah, June 28, Baghdad

Bakri, a director and news producer for the local television station, Al-Sharqiyah, was killed by gunfire as he approached U.S. troops, according to Ali Hanoon, a station director. Hanoon said Bakri was driving from work to his in-laws' home in southern Baghdad at the time.

U.S. soldiers fired at the car 15 times, and Bakri died later at Yarmouk Hospital, Hanoon said. The Associated Press, citing another colleague and a doctor who treated the journalist, reported that Bakri failed to pull over for a U.S. convoy while trying to pass a traffic accident.

The U.S. embassy in Baghdad issued a statement of condolence to the family and the station, the BBC reported.

Khaled al-Attar, Al-Iraqiya, July 1, Mosul

Al-Attar, an Iraqi television producer for the state news channel Al-Iraqiya, was killed in Mosul after being kidnapped earlier in the day. Ghazi al-Faisal, a supervisor at the Al-Iraqiya station in Mosul, said al-Attar helped produce a number of programs, including a satirical look at Iraqi government. Al-Attar also appeared on camera. Al-Faisal said that he was unaware of any threats to al-Attar, but noted that the station's employees have been targeted.

Al-Faisal said that al-Attar was working when he was kidnapped shortly after noon. His bullet-ridden body was found later in the day near a local mosque. Insurgents increasingly targeted Al-Iraqiya and its journalists because of the station's ties to the U.S.-supported Iraqi government. Insurgents killed at least three other employees of the station and its affiliates since 2004, and the offices of the station and its affiliates have repeatedly come under mortar attack.

Adnan al-Bayati, TG3, July 23, Baghdad

Al-Bayati, a freelance producer and translator who worked for the television station TG3, was murdered by three gunmen at his home in al-Adhamiya neighborhood. The men knocked on al-Bayati's door and opened fire when he answered, killing him in front of his wife and baby daughter, said TG3 journalist Giovanna Botteri, who worked closely with al-Bayati.

Al-Bayati was not politically active and had no known personal disputes with any Iraqi factions, according to his colleagues. Botteri and other Italian media believe al-Bayati was targeted because of his work for TG3. The Web site *Articolo 21* said that "al-Bayati fell victim to revenge attacks by Sunni terrorist groups who do not let Iraqis work with foreigners, especially with Western news media, above all Italian media."

Italian journalists in Iraq have been at risk. On February 4, journalist Giuliana Sgrena of the Rome-based daily *Il Manifesto* was kidnapped and held captive for a month. In August 2004, Italian freelance journalist Enzo Baldoni was kidnapped and murdered by a militant group in Najaf.

Al-Bayati, who was born in Diyala, northwest of Baghdad, spoke fluent Italian and spent five years in Italy earning a college degree. He also did some work for the television stations Rai, Mediaset and TG3, and for the magazine *Panorama*.

Steven Vincent, freelance, August 3, Basra

Vincent, who had written for a number of U.S. publications and was working on a book, was abducted along with his interpreter, Noor al-Khal, on August 2. They were taken by armed men driving what initial reports described variously as a government pickup truck or police car.

Vincent's body was riddled with bullets, his hands were tied with plastic wire, and his neck was wrapped in red cloth, *The New York Times* reported. Al-Khal was seriously wounded and was hospitalized.

In an opinion article published in *The Times* on July 31, Vincent said police in Basra had fallen under the sway of Shiite religious groups, and he strongly criticized British authorities in charge of police training for tolerating such influence.

Vincent's work also appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *National Review*. A resident of New York City, he had been in Basra for several months working on a book about the Iraqi port city. Vincent was the first U.S. journalist to be murdered in Iraq.

The reason for Vincent's murder remains unclear. Some speculated he was killed in retaliation for his sensitive reporting on Shiite religious groups in Basra. Others said his close

relationship with al-Khal may have run against religious sensibilities and led to his murder.

Rafed Mahmoud Said al-Anbagy, Diyala TV and Radio, August 27, Baaquba

Al-Anbagy, a 36-year-old news anchor and director at Diyala, part of the U.S.-backed Iraq Media Network, was shot dead in Za'toun neighborhood in the city of Baaquba, east of Baghdad, while covering a football match, sources at the broadcaster told CPJ.

Al-Anbagy was interviewing one of the team's coaches when gunmen opened fire, killing both men. Al-Anbagy was shot in the head. Diyala sources said they believe al-Anbagy was killed because of his on-air criticism of insurgent groups and former Baathists. The sources said al-Anbagy had received several death threats for his reporting.

Waleed Khaled, Reuters, August 28, Baghdad

Khaled, 35, a soundman for Reuters, was shot by U.S. forces several times in the head and chest as he drove with cameraman Haidar Kadhem to investigate a report of clashes between armed men and police in Baghdad's Hay al-Adil district, Reuters reported.

Reuters quoted an Iraqi police report as saying, "A team from Reuters news agency was on assignment to cover the killing of two policemen in Hay al-Adil; U.S. forces opened fire on the team from Reuters and killed Waleed Khaled, who was shot in the head, and wounded Haider Kadhem."

Kadhem, the only known eyewitness, was wounded and was held by U.S. forces at an undisclosed location for three days. Kadhem told reporters at the scene that he heard gunfire and saw a U.S. sniper on the roof of a nearby shopping center. Lt. Col. Steve Boylan, a U.S. military spokesman in Iraq, said Kadhem was detained "due to inconsistencies in his story."

Hind Ismail, *As-Saffir*, September 17, Mosul

Ismail, a 28-year-old reporter for the daily *As-Saffir*, was kidnapped in the northern city of Mosul, local journalists told CPJ. Police in the southern suburb of al-Muthana found her body the next morning with a single bullet wound to the head.

"Hind was a very active reporter in Mosul," *As-Saffir* Deputy Editor Slayhe al-Jowiree said. "We respected her very much in her pursuit to uncover the truth."

The Baghdad-based *As-Saffir* took a strong pro-democracy editorial position and ran a campaign to educate Iraqis on the importance of the new constitution, local journalists said. It criticized insurgent attacks against Iraqi civilians, calling them terrorist operations.

Staff members believe insurgents targeted the newspaper because it supported the new Iraqi constitution, urged citizens to vote, and frequently covered press conferences held by the Iraqi police. The day before her abduction, Hind had covered a police press conference.

A close colleague told CPJ that Ismail was tortured by her captors and forced to reveal the names of other staffers at the newspaper. The torture session was filmed and later viewed by a staff member of the newspaper, the colleague said. The day after Ismail's death, insurgents circulated a list of newspaper staff and posted it on the walls of mosques in Mosul, according

to the colleague. On September 20, *As-Saffir* journalist Firas Maadidi was also killed.

Fakher Haider, *The New York Times*, September 19, Basra

Several men claiming to be police officers seized Haider from his home in al-Asmaey neighborhood on the night of September 18. His body was found the next day in the southwestern Al-Kiblah neighborhood with a gunshot to the head, according to his family. He also had bruises on his back, *The New York Times* said in a statement.

Haider, 38, who reported for *The Times* for more than two years, also worked for Merbad TV in Basra, the *Guardian* of London, *National Geographic*, and other publications. He was married with three small children.

The Times reported that before his murder, Haider "had just filed a report on clashes between British forces in the area and members of a militia that has infiltrated the Basra police force but is loyal to the radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr."

Firas Maadidi, *As-Saffir* and *Al-Masar*, September 20, Mosul

Firas Maadidi, 40, Mosul bureau chief for *As-Saffir* and chief editor of the local daily *Al-Masar*, was killed by unidentified gunmen in the al-Noor neighborhood, *As-Saffir* Deputy Editor Slayhe al-Jowiree told CPJ. Maadidi was shot six times, including twice to the head.

As-Saffir, based in Baghdad, took a strong pro-democracy editorial stance and ran a campaign to educate Iraqis on the importance of the new constitution, local journalists said. It said insurgent attacks against Iraqi civilians were terrorist operations.

"We are an independent newspaper serving the Iraqi people, and we have no political or factional affiliations," Jowiree told CPJ. The murder came just days after the slaying of Hind Ismail, a 28-year-old reporter for *As-Saffir*.

Mohammed Haroon, *Al-Kadiya*, October 19, Baghdad

Unidentified gunmen killed Haroon, a controversial journalist, as he was driving in Baghdad. Haroon, 47, publisher of the weekly newspaper *Al-Kadiya* who also served as secretary-general of the Iraqi Journalists Syndicate, was shot four times, according to CPJ sources.

In weeks before his death, he told colleagues that he had been threatened, told to resign his position at the syndicate, and lower his public profile, CPJ sources said. The syndicate is among a small number of professional press associations in Iraq. In his weekly columns for *Al-Kadiya*, Haroon often accused Iraqi journalists of collaborating with U.S. intelligence, according to CPJ sources. Haroon had once worked for newspapers overseen by Uday Hussein, son of the former Iraqi president, those sources said.

LEBANON: 2

Samir Qassir, *Al-Nahar*, June 2, Beirut

Columnist Samir Qassir was killed in a car bombing outside his home in Beirut's Ashrafiyeh neighborhood. Qassir, well-known throughout the region for supporting democratic reform,

died when a bomb exploded under the driver's seat of his Alfa Romeo. Qassir's murder prompted mass demonstrations in Beirut.

In his popular newspaper column, Qassir vigorously criticized the Syrian government, its Lebanese allies, and Syria's 29-year military and political presence in Lebanon. He was threatened and harassed for his outspoken writing.

In 2001, Lebanese security agents confiscated Qassir's passport in response to his editorials criticizing the Lebanese army and security services. His passport was eventually returned, but authorities said they were investigating the legality of his Lebanese citizenship.

Gebran Tueni, *Al-Nahar*, December 12, 2005, Beirut

Tueni, *Al-Nahar* columnist and managing director, was killed by a car bomb in East Beirut. Tueni, 48, who also served as a member of parliament, was a fierce critic of the Syrian government and its policies in Lebanon.

A parked car exploded as Tueni's armored vehicle drove past. The blast killed three other people and injured 32. Tueni was killed the day after he returned from Paris, where he had spent considerable time because of safety concerns. The Lebanese opposition blamed the attacks on Syria, which denied them.

The bombing came on the day that the United Nations Security Council received a report on a U.N. investigation into the February 14, 2005, assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

Since al-Hariri's murder and the launch of the U.N. inquiry, prominent *Al-Nahar* columnist Samir Qassir was killed in one car bombing and Lebanese Broadcasting Corp. talk show host May Chidiac was seriously wounded in another.

Tueni was a prominent opposition politician and was active in protests following al-Hariri's assassination. Those protests helped prompt Syria to withdraw from Lebanon.

Tueni was well-known for his *Al-Nahar* columns. He helped break an important press taboo in 2000 when he wrote a front-page letter to Bashar al-Assad, son and heir apparent to Syrian president Hafez al-Assad. The letter called for the redeployment and withdrawal of Syrian troops in Lebanon under the 1990 Taif Accords that ended Lebanon's civil war. Although Tueni's letter triggered a public outcry from some newspapers and Lebanese officials, other writers followed his lead.

LIBYA: 1

Daif al-Ghazal al-Shuhaibi, freelance, June 2, outside Benghazi

Al-Ghazal's body was found in a suburb of Benghazi, about 620 miles (1,000 kilometers) east of the capital, Tripoli. He had gone missing from his home on May 21, according to several sources. Al-Ghazal was a former journalist for the government-owned daily *Azahf al-Akhdar* and was contributor to the London-based Web sites *Libya Alyoum* and *Libya Jeel*.

Justice Minister Ali Hasnaoui said al-Ghazal was shot in the head and the death was being

investigated as a murder.

Al-Ghazal, who worked for government media for several years and was a member of the governing Revolutionary Committees, had recently been critical of government officials and the official media in articles for the London-based Web sites. Al-Ghazal wrote an open letter in February, announcing his intention never to write for official media again and saying he was "protesting the attacks...journalists have faced while trying to reveal the truth." Al-Ghazal publicly criticized Libyan officials in his other articles on *Libya Alyoum* and *Libya Jeel*, accusing them of corruption and "stealing the public's money."

A source close to al-Ghazal told CPJ that the journalist was briefly detained and questioned by Libyan security agents in April.

MEXICO: 1

Dolores Guadalupe García Escamilla, Stereo 91, April 16, Nuevo Laredo

Crime reporter García Escamilla died from injuries she suffered in an April 5 shooting in front of her radio station in the border city of Nuevo Laredo. García Escamilla was hospitalized in critical condition after being struck by nine shots to the abdomen, pelvis, arms, and legs as she arrived at work, Stereo 91 News Director Roberto Gálvez Martínez told CPJ. She hosted the program "Punto Rojo" for Stereo 91 XHNOE in Nuevo Laredo, a violence-plagued city of 500,000 in the state of Tamaulipas.

The attack occurred about a half hour after the station aired a report by García Escamilla on the slaying of a Nuevo Laredo defense lawyer, Gálvez Martínez said. An unidentified assailant approached García Escamilla after she parked her car in front of the station just before 8 a.m., firing 14 times in all, the Mexican press reported.

García Escamilla, an experienced reporter who had worked for several media outlets in the city, had covered crime for Stereo 91 since 2001. Gálvez Martínez told CPJ that García Escamilla's car was torched in early January in front of her house. He said no motive was established for the arson, although press reports speculated that it stemmed from her reporting.

Several news reports later included speculation that García Escamilla had links to one of the criminal groups fighting to control the drug trade in Nuevo Laredo, but the evidence was inconclusive. Investigators, who initially said the murder appeared to be connected to her reporting, said later that they had not disregarded other motives.

NEPAL: 1

Maheshwar Pahari, *Rastriya Swabhiman*, October 4, Pokhara

Imprisoned reporter Pahari died after being denied proper medical treatment by authorities. Pahari, 30, who worked for the weekly *Rastriya Swabhiman*, died of multiple illnesses in a hospital in Pokhara, 80 miles (130 kilometers) northwest of Kathmandu, according to local journalist groups.

Local doctors had recommended Pahari be transferred to Kathmandu for better treatment, and members of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) in Pokhara offered to pay to

send him, the FNJ said. But officials refused, citing security concerns. He was provided treatment at the local hospital only after repeated appeals by his wife, Durga Pahari, local journalists told CPJ.

Pahari was detained by security forces in the village of Khorako Mukh, in western Nepal's Kaski district on January 2, 2004. He was held incommunicado for several months. Local journalists believe that his detention was linked to his journalistic work. Pahari maintained close contacts in the Maoist rebel movement, and some sources told CPJ that security forces might have detained him to gather information about the leadership of the insurgency against King Gyanendra.

Pahari was held under an anti-terrorism law that has been used to jail journalists since it was introduced in November 2001. Authorities released and re-arrested him four times after January 2004 in order to comply with that law, which limits detention without trial to six months. In May, he was released from a Kaski jail and arrested before he could leave the compound, local human rights and media advocacy groups reported.

PAKISTAN: 2

**Allah Noor, Khyber TV, February 7, Wana
Amir Nowab (also known as Mir Nawab), Associated Press Television News and
Frontier Post, February 7, Wana**

Gunmen in the capital of the remote South Waziristan tribal area fatally shot Nowab, also known as Nawab, a freelance cameraman for Associated Press Television News and a reporter for the *Frontier Post* newspaper, and Noor, who was working for Peshawar-based Khyber TV.

The journalists were on their way back from the town of Sararogha, where they were covering the surrender of suspected tribal militant Baitullah Mehsud.

A car overtook the journalists' bus at around 7:30 p.m. near the town of Wana, and assailants opened fire with AK-47 assault rifles, according to The Associated Press, which quoted Mahmood Shah, chief of security for Pakistan's tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. Two other journalists riding in the bus were injured. Anwar Shakir, a stringer for Agence France-Presse, was wounded in the back during the attack, according to news reports. Dilawar Khan, who was working for Al-Jazeera, received minor injuries.

Days later, an unknown group calling itself "Sipah-e-Islam" (Soldiers of Islam) took responsibility for the killings in a letter faxed to newspapers. It accused some journalists of "working for Christians" and of "being used as tools in negative propaganda...against the Muslim mujahedeen."

Local journalists blamed officials for not doing more at the time of the murders. They said no attempt was made to stop the gunmen's vehicle even though the attack took place in an area under government control. They also said no real investigation into the murders took place.

The Pakistani military launched a major offensive against suspected al-Qaeda fighters in South Waziristan, a semiautonomous tribal region, in early 2004. Access to areas of the fighting is increasingly restricted for all journalists, and threats from militants make reporting conditions very dangerous, local sources say.

PHILIPPINES: 4

Marlene Garcia-Esperat, *Midland News* and DXKR, March 24, Tacurong

A gunman walked into columnist Marlene Garcia-Esperat's house in the city of Tacurong, and shot her in front of her family. Garcia-Esperat died at the scene from a single bullet wound to her head, police told reporters. The gunman and his accomplice escaped from the scene on a motorcycle.

An anti-graft columnist for the *Midland Review* in the southern island of Mindanao, Garcia-Esperat, 45, was under police protection as a result of death threats. Local news reports said that on the day of the shooting she let her two guards leave early for the Easter holiday.

The Philippine National Police Chief, General Arturo Lomibao told reporters "the motive is work-related as media practitioner." In a radio interview, George Esperat said that his wife had "made many enemies because of her exposés" and that she had received death threats via text message. He also suggested Garcia-Esperat's murder was connected to a corruption story that she wrote, accusing a police officer of involvement in illegal logging activity. Tacurong Police Chief Raul Supiter said that no motive had been ruled out, according to the Philippines-based MindaNews news service.

On April 11, police announced the arrest of four suspects, including an army sergeant. The four were said to confess their involvement, according to local reports. Newspapers reported several possible leads as to the mastermind; those reports included allegations that two officials from the Mindanao Department of Agriculture, Osmeña Montañer and Estrella Sabay, plotted Garcia-Esperat's murder. The officials denied the accusations, but one of the defendants, Randy Barua, a former bodyguard for Sabay, told police that he hired the gunmen at the behest of Montañer and Sabay, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* reported.

Murder charges were brought against the two officials, but a judge dismissed them on August 31 because of what he termed insufficient and conflicting evidence. The Esperat family lawyer, Nena Santos, told the *Manila Standard* that the dismissal was "highly questionable and suspicious," and that it was a "miscarriage of justice." Santos said the judge made the decision the day before being transferred to another jurisdiction, and the court clerk did not announce the ruling until September 20.

Press freedom groups protested the dismissal of charges against the accused masterminds. The four initial defendants also complained to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Gerry Cabayag, identified as the gunman, said he was afraid of retribution from the two agriculture officials, the *Inquirer* reported.

A chemist by training, Garcia-Esperat began her work exposing corruption in the early 1990s. During her tenure as ombudsman for the Department of Agriculture, she filed legal actions against several officials accusing them of graft, according to the *Inquirer*. She also spent two years in the witness protection program due to her ombudsman discoveries.

Garcia-Esperat became a full-time journalist in 2004 after growing frustrated with the government's tepid reaction to corruption, she told the *Inquirer* in an earlier interview. She

started hosting a program on local radio station DXKR in 2001, and began her column "Madame Witness" at the end of 2002. Garcia-Esperat was also a longtime source for many journalists.

Klein Cantoneros, DXAA-FM, May 4, Dipolog City

Cantoneros, a "block-time" radio broadcaster known for hard-hitting commentary, died after being shot as many as seven times by motorcycle-riding gunmen in Dipolog City on the southern island of Mindanao.

Cantoneros, 32, who frequently criticized local officials for alleged corruption and illegal gambling on his talk radio program on DXAA-FM, was returning home at around 1:30 a.m. when he was attacked by as many as three gunmen, according to local news reports.

Cantoneros was clutching his own .45-caliber pistol when he was found, and he appeared to have fired back at his attackers, the news Web site *ABS-CBN* quoted police as saying. Cantoneros' colleague, Robert Baguio, told radio station DZBB that the journalist identified his assailants before undergoing surgery, according to the *Inquirer News Service*. He died at around 11 p.m.

Cantoneros' colleagues told reporters that the journalist had received several death threats, some by text message, *ABS-CBN* reported. Journalists said that Cantoneros was likely murdered in retaliation for his bold commentary about local politicians.

Cantoneros began hosting his popular program, "Nasud, Pagmata Na" (People, Wake Up), in 2004. Prior to joining the station, he did public relations for political candidates.

A special task force dedicated to solving Cantoneros' murder was formed in May, headed by Dipolog City Philippine National Police Chief Tomas Hizon. In September, police arrested a suspect after a witness identified him as one of three gunmen. Another witness confirmed the identification. The suspect has denied involvement.

"Block-timing" is a controversial practice in which the broadcaster leases airtime from a station owner. These commentators solicit their own commercial sponsors; critics say they are more likely to abuse their power and engage in questionable practices.

Cantoneros died two days after CPJ named the Philippines the most murderous country for journalists in the world.

Philip Agustin, *Starline Times Recorder*, May 10, Paltic

Agustin, editor and publisher of the local weekly *Starline Times Recorder*, was killed by a single shot to the back of the head, according to local news reports. Police said a gunman fired through an open window in the home of Agustin's daughter and then fled on a motorcycle driven by an accomplice. The murder occurred in the village of Paltic, about 70 miles (112 kilometers) northeast of Manila.

A special edition of the *Starline Times Recorder* dedicated to corruption and illegal logging in the nearby town of Dingalan was scheduled to come out on May 11. Valentino Lapuz, a member of the local council who witnessed the shooting, said in an interview with GMA

television that the newspaper linked the local mayor to missing government money. Mayor Jaime Ylarde denied wrongdoing.

Agustin's family told police that his articles about local corruption and official inaction against the illegal logging trade were the likely motives for his murder, according to the *ABS-CBN* news Web site.

Witnesses in May identified three suspects. The alleged gunman, Reynaldo Morete, arrested on May 14, identified Ylarde as the mastermind, according to local press reports and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, a press freedom organization. The other suspects remained at large.

The mayor was not immediately charged and repeatedly denied any involvement in the killing.

Rolando "Dodong" Morales, DXMD, July 3, Polomolok

The radio commentator was ambushed and shot at least 15 times by a gang of motorcycle-riding assailants while driving home on the southern island of Mindanao. Morales, who died at the scene, had just finished hosting his weekly program on radio DXMD in General Santos City.

Danilo Mangila, the local police chief, told reporters that Morales was riding a motorcycle with a companion on a highway leading to the town of Polomolok when eight assailants on four motorcycles stopped him and opened fire at around 6 p.m. The gunmen surrounded Morales and continued shooting even after he fell to the ground, witnesses told police. Morales' companion was wounded, according to local news reports.

Police compiled a list of possible suspects in mid-July that included several police officers assigned to Polomolok, the *Inquirer* News Service reported.

Police cited Morales' crusading anti-drug commentaries as the likely motive for his murder, but Chief Inspector Rex Anongos, head of the Polomolok police, told the *MindaNews* wire service that police had not ruled out personal motives for the killing.

In August, police in General Santos City arrested and filed murder charges against two suspects in Morales' murder, including the alleged mastermind.

Morales, 43, hosted a weekly "block-time" program called "Voice of the Village" on Radyo Agong, a Radio Mindanao Network affiliate, and he was known for his tough commentaries, Mangila said. He accused local politicians of corruption and involvement in the illegal drug trade. Morales, who had been broadcasting since 2003, was active with a neighborhood anticrime task force and reported its findings on the air, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility reported. The *ABS-CBN* news Web site reported that Morales also accused local officials of involvement in summary executions.

Morales worked as an inspector at the Dole pineapple plantation and held local office before starting his radio work, CMFR reported.

Morales' wife, Floreta, told the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* that her husband had received

several death threats by text message beginning in November 2004 because of his crusade against illegal drugs. She said that he continued to broadcast despite the threats "because it was a public service," and that he worked at the radio station on a volunteer basis.

Emir Bariquit, program director of DXMD Radyo Agong told the Inquirer News Service that Morales was likely killed for his fiery commentary. Bariquit said he saw a threatening letter sent to Morales a few months ago, warning the commentator to halt his criticism of local officials and illegal drugs.

RUSSIA: 2

Pavel Makeev, Puls, May 21, Azov

Makeev's body was found beside a road on the outskirts of the Rostov region town shortly after the 21-year-old cameraman arrived to film illegal drag racing. Authorities initially classified the death as a traffic accident, but colleagues believed Makeev was killed to prevent his reporting, according to CPJ interviews.

The body, which had multiple bruises and fractures, was found in a ditch around 1 a.m. The road connecting Azov with the town of Bataysk is the site of drag races organized by local young people, which draw large crowds and illegal betting. Residents said the races had been going on for years, but police had not stopped them.

Makeev had gone to film a race for a report for the Puls television station. Colleague Sergei Bondarenko told CPJ he gave Makeev a ride to the site at 11:30 p.m. on May 20. Bondarenko said he left an hour later. "Pavel said he wanted to shoot some more. He assured me that he could get a taxi or ask somebody for a ride to come back home," Bondarenko said.

Police discovered a pool of blood on the road 50 feet (15 meters) from Makeev's body, according to local reports and CPJ interviews, indicating the body might have been dragged to the ditch. No tire marks were found on the pavement.

Makeev's video camera and cell phone were missing. Police said they discovered the car that allegedly hit Makeev, but no arrests were reported.

The investigation was transferred to the Rostov regional prosecutor's office. "Investigators do not consider Makeev's professional activity to be a possible motive for the crime," Elena Velikova, press secretary for the prosecutor, told CPJ. But at least two journalists told CPJ that they believed Makeev's death was linked to his work. They noted that reporters who have tried to cover drag racing have often been threatened.

Aleksei Sklyarov, Puls general director, told CPJ that racers would not want to see Makeev report on an illegal event. Grigory Bochkaryov, Rostov expert for the Moscow-based press freedom organization Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations, told CPJ that traffic police often accept bribes in exchange for allowing the drag races. In a report following Makeev's death, Puls said the drag races typically attract large crowds, and it asked why no witnesses had come forward.

Makeev's colleagues conducted their own investigation because Rostov prosecutors would not discuss the case and closed the investigation, claiming an "absence of evidence of a

crime," Sklyarov told CPJ. Eyewitnesses told the journalists that a drag racing vehicle struck Makeev, and that a suspected race organizer threw Makeev's camera into a nearby river after watching its footage, Sklayrov said.

After additional inquiries by CPJ, Rostov prosecutor Vasily Afanasiev said in September that his office had reopened the case.

Magomedzagid Varisov, *Novoye Delo*, June 28, Makhachkala

Machine-gun toting assailants opened fire on Varisov's sedan at around 9 p.m. as he was returning home with his wife and driver. Varisov sustained multiple bullet wounds and died at the scene. His wife was not injured; the driver was hospitalized with injuries, according to local press reports.

The Kirovsky district prosecutor's office said Varisov's journalism was the most likely motive, local reports said.

For the past three years, Varisov wrote analytical articles for the Makhachkala-based *Novoye Delo*, Dagestan's largest weekly. Rumina Elmurzayeva, editor of *Novoye Delo*, told CPJ that Varisov had his own page devoted to political analysis, which was often critical of the Dagestan opposition. Varisov wrote that the opposition was trying to destabilize the republic and topple the regional government. Varisov also wrote about organized crime and terrorism, local reports said.

Varisov headed the Republican Center for Strategic Initiatives and Political Technologies, a center for political analysis in Makhachkala, Elmurzayeva told CPJ. Varisov was considered a leading expert on the North Caucasus region, and his expertise was sought by many Russian journalists, she said.

In the most recent issue of *Novoye Delo*, Varisov examined a Russian army unit's June 4 sweep in the Chechen border town of Borozdinovskaya in which one person was killed and 11 others were reported missing. Ethnic Avars, fearing for their lives, left Borozdinovskaya by the hundreds and crossed into neighboring Dagestan, local reports said.

"Varisov criticized Chechen authorities in his article for failing to protect the safety of Borozdinovskaya residents and appealed to Dagestan authorities to do right by them," Elmurzayeva told CPJ.

For the past year, Varisov had spoken of threats against him and had written about those threats in articles for *Novoye Delo*, Elmurzayeva said. Varisov complained that unknown individuals were following him, and he unsuccessfully sought protection from Makhachkala law enforcement authorities, she said.

A combat unit in Makhachkala killed three suspects during a separate operation on October 25, Elmurzayeva told CPJ. Local prosecutors closed their case shortly afterward, she said.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO: 1

Bardhyl Ajeti, *Bota Sot*, June 25, outside Pristina

Ajeti, 28, a reporter for the Albanian-language daily *Bota Sot*, died in an Italian hospital on June 25, three weeks after being shot in Kosovo, Agence France-Presse reported.

Ajeti was driving from Kosovo's capital, Pristina, to the eastern Kosovo town of Gnjilane on June 3 when at least one attacker shot at him from a passing car, according to the Kosova Journalists Association, a local union. Ajeti fell into a coma after being shot and was evacuated to a hospital in Milan where he died, AFP reported.

Police spokesman Refki Morina said that Ajeti was shot in the head at close range but did not disclose any possible motives, according to The Associated Press.

Baton Haxhiu, president of the Kosova Journalists Association, told CPJ that Ajeti wrote daily editorials for *Bota Sot*, which is allied with the governing Democratic League of Kosovo party. He often criticized opposition party figures in his editorials, Haxhiu told CPJ.

The Temporary Media Commissioner, Kosovo's internationally supervised media regulator, said in a June 6 statement that Ajeti filed a complaint with the office on May 17 saying that his life had been threatened.

In summer 2002, *Bota Sot* and Ajeti supported international authorities who arrested former members of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA) as part of a broader anticrime campaign, according to the London-based Institute for War & Peace Reporting. Ajeti later criticized nationalist Albanian protestors for demanding that international forces release the arrested members of the KLA.

Several journalists from Kosovo told CPJ that Ajeti was in the process of leaving *Bota Sot* to establish a rival newspaper.

SIERRA LEONE: 1

Harry Yansaneh, *For Di People*, July 28, Freetown

A judicial inquest found that a May attack on Yansaneh, acting editor of the daily *For Di People*, contributed to his death from kidney failure more than two months later. Yansaneh had accused Member of Parliament Fatmata Hassan of ordering the May 10 attack, which she denied.

The extent of Yansaneh's injuries was not clear at the time of the attack, and he was not hospitalized. The inquest found that Yansaneh's death was "accelerated by the beating" and called it a case of involuntary manslaughter.

A magistrate ordered the arrest of Hassan, three of her children, and two other men for suspected manslaughter. Hassan, an MP for the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party, Olu Campbell, and Reginald Bull were detained on August 26. All three were released on bail on August 30. Police said they planned to seek the extradition of Hassan's two sons and a daughter from the United Kingdom.

Prior to the attack, Hassan had sought to evict *For Di People* and five other independent newspapers from the offices they had rented from her late husband for many years. *For Di People's* offices were also vandalized.

Yansaneh had taken over as senior editor following the imprisonment of *For Di People's* editor and publisher, Paul Kamara, in October 2004. Kamara was convicted of "seditious libel" and sentenced to two years in jail for articles that criticized President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

The government ordered the inquest following strong local and international pressure.

SOMALIA: 2

Kate Peyton, BBC, February 9, Mogadishu

Peyton, a BBC producer, was shot outside her hotel in the Somali capital. Peyton underwent surgery at a local hospital but died later of internal bleeding, according to the BBC.

News reports said Peyton was shot outside the Sahafi Hotel, where she had arrived just hours earlier to begin a series of reports on the strife-torn country. Several foreign reporters were based at the heavily guarded hotel.

Agence France-Presse quoted witnesses as saying that assailants targeted Peyton before speeding off in a white sedan. The vehicle was later found abandoned in a central Mogadishu neighborhood, Mohammed Warsame Doleh, the acting police chief, told AFP.

Peyton's attackers were believed to be two independent militiamen, according to the National Union of Somali Journalists, which conducted its own investigation into the slaying. No official legal action was taken.

The BBC said Peyton had spent the last 10 years in Africa and was based in Johannesburg. She had worked for the BBC since 1993 and had also worked as a producer and trainer for the South African Broadcasting Corporation in Johannesburg.

Foreign reporters had just returned to Mogadishu, where efforts were under way to install a transitional reconciliation government. Local sources said Peyton may have been targeted to discourage foreigners and maintain a climate of insecurity.

Violence and lawlessness are rife in Somalia, which has had no effective central government since the fall of dictator Siad Barre in 1991.

Duniya Muhyadin Nur, Capital Voice, June 5, Afgoye

Muhyadin was shot to death while covering a protest in Afgoye, about 18 miles (30 kilometers) from Mogadishu. Muhyadin, 26, was a reporter for the Mogadishu-based radio station Capital Voice, owned by the HornAfrik media company.

She was covering a blockade by commercial drivers on the Mogadishu-Afgoye road, according to HornAfrik Co-Director Ahmed Abdisalam Adan. The drivers were protesting the proliferation of militia roadblocks. While they were attempting to stop private traffic, a gunman fired into Muhyadin's taxi, Abdisalam told CPJ. The bullet passed through the front seat and hit Muhyadin, who died instantly.

CPJ sources said the gunman was the assistant of a protesting trucker from the same sub-clan as his victim. Following negotiations, he paid compensation to her family, according to Somali tradition.

Somalia has had no functioning central government since the collapse of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. Militia leaders have carved the country into rival fiefdoms, many of them riddled by violence. In May, veteran HornAfrik journalist Abdallah Nurdin was wounded by an unidentified gunman.

SRI LANKA: 2

Dharmeratnam Sivaram, *TamilNet* and *Daily Mirror*, April 29, Colombo

Sivaram was abducted on the night of April 28 and found dead the next morning from gunshot wounds to the head.

Four unidentified men forced Sivaram into a jeep as he left a restaurant directly across from the Bambalapitya police station in the capital, according to witness accounts. Police told The Associated Press that they received an anonymous call early the next morning giving the location of Sivaram's body in Talangama, several miles outside of Colombo. The *TamilNet* news Web site reported that his body was found in a high-security area behind a parliament building.

A founding member and contributor to *TamilNet* and a military and political columnist for the English language *Daily Mirror*, Sivaram wrote sympathetically about the rebel group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Police searched his house twice last year looking for weapons but did not find anything.

The LTTE split into two warring factions in 2004 after a rebel leader known as Colonel Karuna broke away to form his own rival army in eastern Sri Lanka. A cycle of violence has escalated from the east throughout the country, with the warring Tamil factions going on killing sprees that target each other's alleged supporters, including journalists.

A pro-LTTE Tamil lawmaker, Amirthanathan Adaikkalanathan, told The Associated Press that Sivaram's last article for the Tamil-language daily *Virekasari* criticized the rebel leader Karuna. Sivaram had received death threats in recent weeks, according to exiled Tamil journalists.

Relangi Selvarajah, Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corp., August 12, Colombo

Popular Tamil broadcaster Relangi Selvarajah and her husband, a political activist, were killed by unidentified gunmen in Colombo on the same day that Lakshman Kadirgamar, Sri Lanka's foreign minister, was assassinated. Political leaders blamed the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for all three killings, charges the LTTE denied.

The attackers shot Selvarajah, 44, and her husband, Senathurai, in the office where they ran a travel agency. Sri Lanka's *Sunday Times* reported that the LTTE had criticized Selvarajah for broadcasting anti-LTTE programs.

Selvarajah was a radio and television host for 20 years, presenting news programs for the state-run Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) and more recently for the Sri Lanka

Rupavahini Corp., according to the Free Media Movement, a local press freedom organization.

Local newspapers reported that Selvarajah also produced the SLBC program "Ithaya Veenai," a program known for criticizing the LTTE, and allegedly funded by the opposition Tamil political party, the Eelam People's Democratic Party.

Selvarajah's husband was affiliated with the formerly militant and now mainstream group, the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), according to local news reports and sources. PLOTE is critical of the LTTE; the LTTE accuses PLOTE of attacking its members, according to The Associated Press.

Sri Lanka's *Daily Mirror* quoted police as saying that they suspected the couple may have been murdered because of Selvarajah's anti-LTTE programs. But their connection to PLOTE also raised the possibility that their killing may have been part of a larger cycle of violence and could be connected to the April murder of well-known pro-LTTE Tamil journalist Dharmeratnam Sivaram, local sources told CPJ. Sivaram was a former member of PLOTE who defected to the LTTE.

Political and ethnic factions began a series of revenge killings across the country last year when a Tamil rebel leader known as Colonel Karuna split from the LTTE.

The government declared a state of emergency on August 13 and President Chandrika Kumaratunga accused the LTTE of killing Kadirgamar, a critic of the LTTE.

MOTIVE UNCONFIRMED: 11

BELARUS: 1

Vasily Grodnikov, *Narodnaya Volya*, October 17, Minsk

Grodnikov, a freelancer for the Minsk opposition newspaper, was found dead in his apartment with a head wound.

Grodnikov's brother, Nikolai Grodnikov, said the journalist was murdered because of his work for *Narodnaya Volya*, Agence France-Presse reported. He said his brother had survived an attack in January, but he gave no details. *Narodnaya Volya* Editor-in-Chief Yosif Seredich said that Grodnikov, 66, wrote mostly about social issues and had no links to the authorities or the opposition, the independent news agency Belapan reported.

Authorities had harassed *Narodnaya Volya* in retaliation for its criticism of President Aleksandr Lukashenko. State-run kiosks were not permitted to sell the newspaper. Authorities had recently ended its printing contract, forcing it to use a printer in the neighboring Russian city of Smolensk.

Nikolai Grodnikov said, "There was a lot of blood on the walls, the floor, the window... Everything in the house was turned over." The journalist's niece, Natalya Grodnikov, said that there was no sign of robbery or forced entry.

The Interior Ministry said that Grodnikov had died of a stroke, the independent Moscow

daily *Gazeta* reported. However, an autopsy at the Minsk Regional Clinical Hospital concluded that the cause of death was head trauma. The Minsk regional prosecutor's office was investigating the death, Belapan reported.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: 1

Franck Kangundu, *La Référence Plus*, November 3, Kinshasa

Kangundu, a veteran political affairs journalist at the independent daily *La Référence Plus*, was shot shortly after midnight by unidentified assassins who accosted him at his home in the capital, Kinshasa. The attackers also killed Kangundu's wife, Hélène Mpaka.

The Kinshasa-based press freedom organization Journaliste en Danger (JED) reported that several masked men approached Kangundu in front of his house, forced their way in, and shot his wife as she tried to escape. When Kangundu offered them money and his car if they would let him go, the assailants replied that they had been "sent to kill him," according to witnesses interviewed by JED whose names were withheld. The assailants took the journalist's mobile phone before leaving.

Kangundu, 52, worked for *La Référence Plus* for more than 10 years and was well-respected by his colleagues, local journalists said. He covered a variety of topics for the newspaper, including the sometimes acrimonious relations between political parties in the DRC's power-sharing government, as well as business and economic issues.

A delegation of journalists met on November 7 with Vice President Azerias Ruberwa to demand an independent inquiry. The meeting was held after 1,000 journalists and other media workers took part in a silent demonstration through the streets of Kinshasa. The government said it had detained suspects and promised a full inquiry.

HAITI: 1

Jacques Roche, *Le Matin*, July 14, Port-au-Prince

Roche, cultural editor with the Port-au-Prince-based daily *Le Matin*, was kidnapped on July 10 and found dead four days later in a slum in Haiti's capital. His body was handcuffed, riddled with bullets, and mutilated, according to international press reports.

The journalist was taken from his car in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Nazon, the Haitian press reported. Roche, who was also a poet, hosted a local television station show for the 184 Group, a coalition of civil society organizations that opposed former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. His captors demanded US\$250,000 in ransom, The Associated Press said.

The *St. Petersburg Times* reported that the kidnappers who seized Roche sold the journalist to a gang that wanted him dead for sympathizing with an anti-Aristide group. Franck Séguy, a colleague at *Le Matin*, told CPJ that there is wide speculation that Roche may have been killed because of his television work for the 184 Group.

Judge Jean Peres Paul, who is in charge of the investigation, told CPJ that three suspects had been identified and faced preliminary charges. He said he couldn't comment on the possible motive or disclose the identities of the suspects. Published reports said that on July 21 Haitian authorities arrested the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, a prominent Roman Catholic priest and figure in the Lavalas party of ousted President Aristide. Authorities accused him of involvement in Roche's slaying. The priest was jailed but not immediately charged. Aristide supporters said the priest's detention was politically motivated. Amnesty International labeled Jean-Juste a "prisoner of conscience."

IRAQ: 1

Abdul-Hussein Khazal, Al-Hurra, February 9, Basra

Khazal, 40, and his son were gunned down outside their home around 8 a.m., Al-Hurra said in a statement. Khazal, who joined the U.S.-funded television station in April 2004, also worked as a correspondent for the U.S.-funded radio station Radio Sawa, the station said.

Al-Hurra News Director Mouafac Harb told CPJ that the station was investigating the incident and was not aware of any threats against Khazal stemming from his work.

Agence France-Press reported that a previously unknown group calling itself The Imam al-Hassan al-Basri Brigades claimed responsibility for the shooting in a statement posted on an Islamic Web site. Agence France-Presse said the posting accused Khazal of being a member of the Badr Brigades, a Shiite militia affiliated with Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. The Associated Press reported that Khazal was a member of the rival Shiite political party Dawa, worked as an editor for a local newspaper, and served as a press officer for the Basra city council.

In an interview with CPJ, Harb disputed reports of Khazal's Shiite political affiliations and said the reporter "was killed because he was a journalist."

MEXICO: 1

Raúl Gibb Guerrero, *La Opinión*, April 8, Poza Rica

Gibb Guerrero, 53, owner and director of the daily newspaper, in the eastern state of Veracruz, was killed in an apparent ambush in the city of Poza Rica at about 10 p.m., according to press reports. Four unidentified gunmen fired at least 15 shots at Gibb Guerrero as he was driving home to Papantla, according to those reports.

Struck by eight shots, three to his head, Gibb Guerrero lost control of his vehicle and crashed. He was pronounced dead at the scene. The assailants fled in two cars, according to the local press.

Earlier that night, Gibb Guerrero was in the city of Martínez de la Torre, where a new edition of *La Opinión* was launched, the Mexican press reported. Gibb Guerrero had received anonymous death threats days before the attack, but he didn't express great concern over them, a *La Opinión* editor told CPJ on condition of anonymity.

In October, federal agents raided the home of Gibb Guerrero's sister, seizing a grenade,

several pistols, and a large stash of ammunitions, The Associated Press reported. A few days later, a second home was raided and the personal secretary of the director's sister was charged with arms possession. Investigators told CPJ that Gibb Guerrero's slaying could have been motivated by personal factors, but did not rule out professional possibilities.

PHILIPPINES: 4

Arnulfo Villanueva, *Asian Star Express Balita*, February 28, Naic

Villanueva, 43, a columnist for the community newspaper, was found shot on a road in the town of Naic, just south of Manila. A local village official found his body, according to the Manila-based Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR).

Villanueva had criticized local officials in connection with illegal gambling, according to CMFR, but police did not determine a motive.

Ricardo "Ding" Uy, *DZRS*, November 18, Sorsogon City

Radio announcer Uy, known for his leftist political activities, was killed by a gunman outside his home in Sorsogon City, Sorsogon province, 230 miles (375 kilometers) southeast of Manila.

Uy, 49, was president of the Media Reporters Association and provincial coordinator of Bayan Muna (People First), a leftist political party. Uy was shot five times by an assailant who fled with an accomplice on a motorcycle, according to Deutsche Presse Agentur. He died soon after at a nearby hospital. In an interview with the *ABS-CBN* news Web site, Bayan Muna Deputy Secretary General Roberto de Castro said that Uy received threats before he was killed. De Castro said Uy was known as a critic of the army.

Robert Ramos, *Katapat*, November 20, Cabuyao

Ramos, 39, a reporter for the weekly tabloid, was shot twice in the head outside a market in Cabuyao, Laguna province, 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of the capital, Manila. Ramos was waiting for a ride home from work when two motorcycle-riding assailants shot him, according to police reports cited in the local media. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

On December 1, police identified two brothers as suspects in the murder. Police said the suspects believed the reporter had tipped off authorities that they sold pirated DVDs and CDs from a shop in Cabuyao. Authorities had raided the shop and confiscated merchandise on November 17. It was not immediately clear whether Ramos worked on a story connected to pirated merchandise.

George Benaojan, *DYBB* and *Bantay Balita*, December 1, Cebu

An unidentified gunman killed radio and newspaper journalist Benaojan in the central city of Cebu before fleeing in a taxi. Benaojan, 27, died at a local hospital shortly afterward, according to international news reports.

Benaojan was talking to a man in a market when the gunman approached and shot the journalist in the mouth, neck, and chest, according to news reports. A bystander was injured

by a stray bullet. Witnesses reported seeing the gunman in the area several hours before the attack, according to news reports.

Local police told reporters that Benaojan had been receiving death threats; they were reviewing his commentaries and columns to investigate possible motives. Benaojan had reported on alleged corruption in the local customs bureau for DYBB and *Bantay Balita*, a publication distributed among customs personnel. Benaojan was known for reporting on official corruption.

Benaojan survived an attack in August 2004 when three men ambushed him and two colleagues. Benaojan told reporters that he returned fire. He said that anger over his radio commentaries or a personal grudge may have been motives for the attack.

The journalist also ran several businesses, according to news reports.

THAILAND: 2

Pongkiat Saetang, *Had Yai Post*, February 14, Had Yai

Unidentified gunmen shot Pongkiat, editor of the bimonthly newspaper *Had Yai Post*, near a market in Had Yai, in southern Thailand's Songkhla province. Two assailants shot Pongkiat twice in the back while he was riding his motorcycle near Thungsao Market at around 8:30 a.m., *The Nation* quoted police as saying. The Bangkok-based Southeast Asian Press Alliance reported that Pongkiat was pronounced dead at the scene, and the gunmen fled by motorcycle.

Pongkiat, 54, was known for his outspoken commentary on local politics. His critical reporting on Had Yai politicians had prompted threatening phone calls, his wife told reporters.

Local police inspector Lt. Col. Samart Boonmee said that police had not ruled out other possible motives, including personal conflicts, according to local news reports.

The Thai Journalists Association and the Southern Journalists Association of Thailand, to which Pongkiat belonged, condemned the murder and called on Thai national police to conduct a fair and open investigation into the case.

Santi Lamaneenil, *Pattaya Post*, November 2, outside Pattaya

Santi Lamaneenil was found with multiple gunshot wounds to the head in the back of his car outside the beach resort of Pattaya, according to news reports.

Santi, owner of the local *Pattaya Post*, was also a freelance contributor to Channel 7 television and newspapers including *Khaosod*. Police told reporters that the murder could be related to his reporting, but they had not ruled out other motives. Santi had recently reported on illegal operations in late-night entertainment venues, police told local reporters.

Santi's body was found blindfolded and his hands tied with the cord of a mobile phone battery charger on the morning of November 2. Initial autopsy reports showed that he had

been dead for about 10 hours, according to local news reports.

Jongrak Juthanond, the local police chief, told the *Bangkok Post* that investigators believe there were at least three assailants. The journalist's wife told police that Santi had stayed with relatives intermittently in recent months for fear of abduction or attack, according to local news reports.