

## Two of or the World's 40 Journalists Killed This Year Are from Brazil

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2005 is turning out to be another deadly year for journalists. According to International Press Institute's (IPI) statistics, 40 journalists, in particular those investigating corruption, drug trafficking and other illegal activities, have been killed so far this year.

At least 11 journalists and media staffers have died in Iraq alone. Six journalists were killed in the Philippines, and two each in Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Mexico, Pakistan and Somalia.

Brazilian Ricardo Gonçalves Rocha, 72, owner of Jornal Vicentino newspaper in the city of São Vicente, São Paulo state, was shot dead in his car by an assailant on a motorcycle, March 31.

A controversial figure, Gonçalves Rocha was also a city councilman for many years. Police dismissed robbery as a motive since the journalist's valuables were not taken.

José Cândido Amorim Pinto, 45, another Brazilian, was killed July 1st. He was an investigative journalist for Rádio Comunitária Alternativa in Carpina, Pernambuco State.

Pinto was shot dead by two men on a motorcycle as he parked his car outside the radio station. The journalist produced and presented an investigative program in which he frequently reported on corruption cases.

Recent targets of his investigations included local politicians Mandel Botafogo and Antônio Moraes. Pinto had received threats and was injured when two men on a motorcycle fired on his car on May 21.

### Elsewhere

Journalists were also murdered in nine other countries. In 2004, IPI recorded 78 journalists killed worldwide, tree of them being from Brazil.

Thirteen journalists have been killed so far this year in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), where Iraq is once again proving to be the most dangerous country in the world in which to work as a journalist.

Several Iraqi journalists, caught in the middle of a deadly conflict between coalition troops and insurgents, were apparently murdered because they worked for Western or U.S.-funded newspapers or broadcasters.

In addition to the 11 deaths recorded in Iraq, journalists were killed in Libya and Lebanon, where Samir Qassir, a prominent columnist for the leading Lebanese daily newspaper, an-Nahar, and an outspoken critic of the pro-Syrian Lebanese regime, died on 2 June when a bomb, hidden under the driver's seat of his car, was detonated.

In the Americas, nine journalists have been killed so far in 2005, including two each in Brazil, Colombia, Haiti and Mexico.

One journalist, a reporter for the Chilean news agency, La Bocina, was killed in Ecuador while covering protests against President Lucio Gutiérrez.

In Asia, where 14 journalists have been killed, six journalists were murdered in the Philippines alone. At least, 62 journalists have been killed because of their work in the Philippines since democracy was restored in 1986.

Most of these journalists were investigating corruption and other illegal activities, and almost none of the killers have been brought to justice. Two journalists were killed in Bangladesh and Pakistan, respectively, as well as one each in Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

In Europe, one journalist was killed in Azerbaijan and the southern Russian republic of Dagestan, respectively.

Two journalists were killed in Sub-Saharan Africa, both of them in Somalia, where Kate Peyton, a prominent TV producer for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), was shot dead by a masked gunman outside her hotel in Mogadishu on 9 February.

Speaking about this deadly trend against journalists, IPI Director Johann P. Fritz said, "While many journalists are accidentally caught in the cross-fire when reporting on various conflicts, etc., many more are deliberately targeted.

Most of these attacks are committed with impunity. All too often, there is little or no evidence to suggest that the authorities are taking decisive action to identify and bring to justice those responsible for these heinous crimes."

"The failure of governments around the world to ensure immediate and thorough investigations into these killings is unacceptable," Fritz said.

## The Dead

### AFGHANISTAN (1)

May 18: Shaima Rezayee, 24, a former presenter for the privately-owned television station, Tolo TV, was shot and killed in her home in Kabul. Rezayee hosted the daily music program, "Hop", until March 24, when she was fired after Tolo TV came under pressure from a government panel of religious scholars known as the Council of Ulemas, who condemned the channel for broadcasting anti-Islamic programs. Police suspected a connection between her work at Tolo TV and her killing.

### AZERBAIJAN (1)

March 2: Elmar Huseynov, founder and editor of the Russian-language opposition weekly, Monitor, was gunned down in the stairwell of his apartment building in Baku, Azerbaijan. Huseynov, who had received numerous death threats, was known for his articles on government corruption. Over the years, his magazine has been subjected to numerous defamation suits, most of them launched by government officials.

### BANGLADESH (2)

Feb. 11: Sheikh Belaluddin Ahmed, 48, a correspondent for the Bengali-language daily Sangram, died from injuries sustained in a Feb. 5 bomb attack on the Khulna press club. Three other journalists were injured in the attack.

May 30: Golam Mahfuz, 39, editor of the daily Comilla Muktakantha, was stabbed to death in his house in Comilla, 88 km east of the capital, Dhaka. The motive for the killing was not immediately known.

### COLOMBIA (2)

Jan. 11: Julio Hernando Palacios Sánchez, 55, host of the program "El Viento" on Radio Lemas, was shot in the head and stomach on his way to work by two gunmen on a motorcycle in the city of Cúcuta, northern Colombia. Despite his

wounds, he managed to drive back to his house and tell his family to take him to hospital, where he later died, police said. Palacios was known for his exposés on local corruption.

Feb. 19: Hernando Marné Sánchez Roldán, 62, a veteran photojournalist for the Cali daily El País, was shot dead by gunmen on a motorcycle near his home in the southwestern city of Tulúa. He had not received any death threats, relatives said.

## ECUADOR (1)

April 19: Julio Augusto García Romero, 58, a reporter for the Chilean news agency La Bocina, died as a result of police attempts to drive back demonstrators in Ecuador's capital, Quito. The protesters, who were demanding President Lucio Gutiérrez's resignation, were moving toward the presidential Palacio de Carondelet when police fired tear gas grenades into the crowd.

The Chilean-born García Romero was taking photographs of the incident when he collapsed. He was taken to Red Cross headquarters, where he arrived with symptoms of asphyxia, and then transferred to a nearby hospital after suffering a cardio-respiratory arrest.

## HAITI (2)

Jan. 14: Abdias Jean, correspondent for WKAT-AM (1360) in Miami, USA, was killed while covering a police operation in the Village de Dieu sector of Port-au-Prince, a stronghold of supporters of deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Jean's mother reportedly accused police of executing her son because he witnessed abuses committed during the sweep.

April 4: Robenson Laraque, 25, a reporter with the private radio station, Tele Contact, died in a Cuban hospital of injuries sustained while covering a Mar. 20 clash between UN troops and members of the disbanded Haitian military in the city of Petit-Goâve.

Laraque and several colleagues were on the balcony of Tele Contact's offices, when the journalist was struck by two shots to the head and neck. He was taken to a hospital in Port-au-Prince, where he received initial treatment. However, the injuries were so severe that he was later transferred to Cuba.

## IRAQ (11)

Feb. 9: Abdel Hussein Khazal, a correspondent for the U.S.-funded Arabic television station, al-Hurra, was gunned down as he left his house in the city of Basra. His eight-year-old son, Karar, was also killed in the attack. As well as working as a correspondent, Khazal was the head of the press service at Basra city council.

Feb. 25: Raeda Wazzan, 35, a news anchor with the Iraqi state TV channel Al-Iraqiya, was found dead on a roadside in Mosul, where she had lived, five days after she was kidnapped on Feb. 20. She had multiple gunshot wounds to the head. Wazzan had received several death threats with demands that she quit her job. Her 10-year-old son was also kidnapped, but released a few days later.

Mar. 14: Houssam Hilal Sarsam, 27, a camera operator for Kurdistan-TV, who was kidnapped on Mar. 13 in Mosul, 380 km north of Baghdad, was gunned down when he tried to escape his abductors on Mar. 14.

April 14: Fadhil Hazem Fadhil and Ali Ibrahim Issa, producer and cameraman, respectively, for Al-Hurriya television channel, were killed in twin suicide bombings while on their way to an assignment. They were travelling in a car with a reporter and their driver when the bombs exploded outside the Interior Ministry. At least 18 people were killed in the bomb blasts.

April 15: Saman Abdullah Izzedine, a news anchor for Kirkuk TV, was gunned down by unidentified assailants in a black Nissan as he was driving on the main highway from Kirkuk to Baghdad. Kirkuk TV is backed by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

April 23: Saleh Ibrahim, a cameraman for Associated Press Television News (APTN), was killed when gunfire broke out after an explosion in the northern city of Mosul. An AP photographer, Mohamed Ibrahim, was wounded in the same incident.

The explosion happened around 2:30 p.m., local time, near Mosul's al-Yarmook circle. The two AP journalists drove to the scene together, according to a colleague. The colleague drove the injured journalists to al-Jumhuri Educational Hospital. Saleh Ibrahim was treated for three bullet wounds to the chest and died soon after arrival.

May 15: Najem Abd Khudair, a correspondent for the independent daily newspaper Al Mada, and Ahmad Adam, a freelance writer for Al Mada "Sabah", newspaper, were killed on a roadside south of Baghdad. The journalists were among some 13 passengers in a minibus that was stopped by an armed group who picked out the journalists and slit their throats. The rest of the passengers were freed.

July 1: Khaled Sabih Al Attar, 43, a TV producer with the Iraqi public television station, Al-Iraqiya, was shot to death in the northern city of Mosul. According to the head of Al Iraqiya, Al Attar was kidnapped shortly before Friday prayers. His body was found a few hours later in an empty lot.

June 28: Ahmed Wael Bakri, a news producer for the local television station, Al-Sharqiyah, was killed by gunfire as he was driving from work in southern Baghdad. According to a station director, U.S. soldiers fired at his car after he failed to pull over for a military convoy. Bakri died later at Yarmouk Hospital.

#### LEBANON (1)

June 2: Samir Kassir, a columnist for the daily Al-Nahar, was killed outside his home in Beirut's Ashrafiyeh neighborhood when his car exploded after he started the engine. The bomb had been placed under the driver's seat of the car, police said. Kassir was known for his strong criticism of Syria's presence in Lebanon.

#### LIBYA (1)

June 2: Daif Al Ghazal, 32, a writer and journalist, was found dead 12 days after he was abducted by unknown gunmen. Al Ghazal, who wrote articles critical of Muammar Gaddafi's regime for the London-based on-line newspaper, Libya Al-Youm, was kidnapped by two armed men on May 21. His body, which showed signs of torture, was found near the eastern city of Benghazi.

#### MEXICO (2)

April 8: Raúl Gibb Guerrero, 53, owner and director of the Poza Rica-based daily newspaper La Opinión, in the eastern state of Veracruz, was killed in an ambush near his home on April 8. Four unidentified men fired at least 15 shots at the newspaper owner as he was driving home to Papantla, sources said. La Opinión is known for its coverage of organised crime and drug trafficking and Gibb Guerrero had received anonymous death threats.

April 16: Dolores Guadalupe García Escamilla, 39, crime reporter for Stereo 91 XHNOE and host of the radio program "Punto Rojo", died from injuries sustained in an April 5 shooting in front of her radio station in the border city of Nuevo Laredo.

The attack occurred about a half hour after the station aired a report by García Escamilla on the slaying of a Nuevo Laredo defence lawyer. An unidentified assailant approached García Escamilla after she parked her car in front of the

station and fired 14 shots at her.

## NEPAL (1)

Mar. 31: Khagendra Shrestha, 45, editor of the provincial daily, Dharan Today, died of gunshot wounds to the head sustained on Mar. 15 when armed men burst into his office in Dharan, eastern Nepal. He died in hospital in the Indian town of Siliguri, where he was rushed shortly after being shot. Security forces believed Maoist rebels were behind the killing.

## PAKISTAN (2)

Feb. 7: Amir Nawab, a reporter for the English-language daily Frontier Post and freelance cameraman for Associated Press Television News, and Allah Noor, who worked for the Pushto-language Khyber TV, were killed in an ambush in the semiautonomous tribal region of South Waziristan.

The journalists were returning to the town of Wana from remote Sara Rugha, where they were covering the signing of a peace deal between rebel leader, Baitullah Mahsud, and the Pakistani authorities, when a car overtook the journalists' van and two gunmen opened fire with AK-47 assault rifles. Two other journalists, Anwar Shakir, a stringer for Agence France-Presse, and Zardad Khan of Al-Jazeera, were wounded in the incident.

## PHILIPPINES (6)

Feb. 28: Arnulfo Villanueva, 43, a columnist for the Asian Star Express Balita, was shot dead in the town of Naic, Cavite province. He was found by a local village official along a national road at Barangay Timalan. Villanueva had recently criticised some local officials over illegal gambling in Cavite.

Mar. 9: Romeo Sanchez, regional coordinator for the leftist Bayan Muna party and a broadcaster at DZNL radio station in San Fernando City, La Union, was shot dead by a unidentified gunman at a market in Baguio City, 350 km north of Manila. Police described the killing as a well-planned operation.

Mar. 24: Marlene Garcia Esperat, 45, a columnist for the weekly Midland Review on the southern island of Mindanao, was killed by two gunmen who burst into her home and shot her in front of her family.

Garcia Esperat, who was known for her reporting on corruption, was under police protection as result of recent death threats. According to local news reports, she let her two guards leave early for the Easter holidays.

May 4: Klein Cantoneros, 32, a radio broadcaster for DXAA-FM, died after being shot at least seven times by gunmen on motorcycles in Dipolog City, Mindanao Island. Cantoneros frequently criticised local officials for alleged corruption and illegal gambling on his talk radio programme. He had received several death threats.

May 10: Philip Agustin, publisher and editor of the weekly newspaper Starline Times Recorder, was gunned down in the village of Paltic, north of Manila. He was visiting his daughter's house when he was shot through an open window, police said. The murder occurred a day before the newspaper printed a special edition that linked the local mayor, Jaime Ylarde, to corruption.

July 3: Rolando Morales, 43, was shot 15 times by gunmen while heading home from work in General Santos City, Mindanao Island. He had just finished hosting his radio programme, "Voice of the Barangay", on Radio Mindanao Network's dxMD station. Morales, who also served on a local anti-crime task force, frequently exposed drug trafficking and other illegal activities on his programme.

## RUSSIA (1)

June 28: Magomedzagid Varisov, a prominent journalist and political analyst, was shot and killed in Mahachkala, capital of the Russian republic of Dagestan. Varisov, a columnist for Novoye Delo, Dagestan's largest weekly, was returning home with his wife, when unidentified assailants opened fire on his car.

Varisov was fatally wounded and died at the scene. His wife was unharmed; their driver was hospitalized with injuries. Police believe that the attackers targeted Varisov because of his critical reporting.

## SOMALIA (2)

Feb. 9: Kate Peyton, 39, a television producer for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), was shot in the back and killed outside her hotel in Mogadishu. Witnesses said a masked gunman approached her in front of the Hotel Sahafi, fired one bullet and then sped off in a waiting car.

Peyton was taken to hospital and underwent surgery, but later died from internal bleeding. She had just arrived in Somalia with BBC reporter Peter Greste to make a series of reports about the country.

June 5: Duniya Muhiyadin Nur, 26, a journalist for HornAfrik Radio and TV, was killed by an unknown gunman while covering a protest near a militia checkpoint on the road from Mogadishu to Afgoi.

Nur had reportedly gone to Afgoi, approximately 30 km from Mogadishu, to cover a demonstration by truckers against the proliferation of such checkpoints.

## SRI LANKA (1)

April 29: Darmaratnam Sivaram, 47, a columnist for the Daily Mirror, was found shot to death in a field in the capital, Colombo. Sivaram, a founder of the news Website, TamilNet, was abducted after leaving a restaurant on April 28.

He wrote sympathetically about the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Last year, police twice searched his house for weapons, but did not find anything incriminating.

## THAILAND (1)

Feb. 14: Pongkiat Saetang, 54, editor of the Had Yai Post, was shot twice in the back by an unidentified gunman as he was riding his motorcycle in the southern town of Had Yai. He was known for exposés of local corruption.

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