

100 INFORMATION HEROES

World Press Freedom Day 2014 RWB PUBLISHES PROFILES OF “100 INFORMATION HEROES”

For the first time ever, Reporters Without Borders is publishing a list of profiles of “100 information heroes” for World Press Freedom Day (3 May).

Through their courageous work or activism, these “100 heroes” help to promote the freedom enshrined in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the freedom to “to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.” They put their ideals in the service of the common good. They serve as examples.

“World Press Freedom Day, which Reporters Without Borders helped to create, should be an occasion for paying tribute to the courage of the journalists and bloggers who constantly sacrifice their safety and sometimes their lives to their vocation,” said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire.

“These ‘information heroes’ are a source of inspiration to all men and women who aspire to freedom. Without their determination and the determination of all those like them, it would be simply impossible to extend the domain of freedom.

“This obviously non-exhaustive list pays homage not only to the 100 famous and less well known people on it, but also to all the professional and non-professional journalists who constantly help to shed light on the world and cover every aspect of its reality. This initiative aims to show that the fight for freedom of information requires not only active support for the victims of abuses but also the promotion of those who can serve as models.”

The list of “100 information heroes” comprises women and men of almost all ages (25 to 75) and 65 nations. The youngest, Oudom Tat, is Cambodian and the oldest, Muhammed Ziauddin, is Pakistani. Iran, Russia, China, Eritrea, Azerbaijan, Mexico and Vietnam are each represented by at least three heroes.

The lists includes such varied figures as Anabel Hernandez, the author of a bestseller on the collusion between Mexican politicians and organized crime, Ismail Saymaz, a Turkish journalist who has been prosecuted a score of times for his reporting, Hassan Ruvakuki, who was jailed for 15 months in Burundi for interviewing members of a rebel movement, and Gerard Ryle, the head of International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, who has contributed to the emergence of global investigative journalism.

Some work in democracies. They include Glenn Greenwald and Laura Poitras, US citizens who were responsible for revealing the mass electronic surveillance methods used by the US and British intelligence agencies. Others, such as the Iranian journalist Jila Bani Yaghoob, work under the most authoritarian regimes.

Not all are professional journalists. The Vietnamese citizen-journalist Le Ngoc Thanh, for example, is also a Catholic priest. Many, such as Lirio Abbate, a specialist in the Sicilian mafia, have focused on covering corruption and organized crime. This is the case with Peter John Jaban, a Malaysian radio programme host who spent years in self-exile on London, Serhiy Lechtchenko, an investigative journalist from Ukraine, and Assen Yordanov, a Bulgarian journalist who has been repeatedly threatened.

The profiles also include activists like María Pía Matta, who has worked for nearly ten years for the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), defending the freedom of community radio stations in Latin America.

Courage is the common denominator. In Uzbekistan, the authorities had no compunction about torturing Muhammad Bekzhanov to extract a confession. In Eritrea, ranked last in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index for the seventh year running, Dawit Isaac has languished in the dictator Issayas Afeworki's jails for the past 13 years. Mazen Darwish, founder of the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression and winner of the RWB press freedom prize in 2012, has been held for more than two years by the Assad regime.



NAJIBA AYUBI
Afghanistan / Asia-Pacific

Journalist, activist and woman – Najiba Ayubi has a lot of handicaps in a country famed for its warlords. But the managing director of The Killid Group – a non-profit media network that includes two of the country's most popular magazines (*Killid Weekly* and *Mursal Weekly*) and eight radio stations with a total of 12 million listeners – does not let herself be intimidated. When a police chief told her, "You realize you are a woman, don't you," she responded by broadcasting the report he wanted to suppress.

When two gunmen burst into her home and terrified her mother, she reacted as she does to all threats – without fear. In 2013, the International Women's Media Foundation gave her its Courage in Journalism Award.



ZAW PHAY
Burma / Asia-Pacific

Zaw Phay is an experienced journalist who started out as a clandestine video reporter for *Democratic Voice of Burma* (now *DVB Multimedia Group*) during the Saffron Revolution in 2007. He is also a former

political prisoner who was given a three-year jail sentence in 2010 for filming "without permission" while investigating a water shortage in Nat Mauk, in the central Magway region. Released in a January 2012 amnesty, he went back to work at once. His journalistic dedication got him into trouble a few months later when he investigated a Japanese-funded scholarship programme in Magway. A local education department official filed a complaint accusing him of trespassing on government property and disturbing a civil servant in the course of his duties. In April 2014, almost two years after the complaint, Zaw Phay was sentenced to a year in prison under articles 448 and 353 of the penal code. He is currently serving the sentence in Thet prison.



ASSEN YORDANOV
Bulgaria / European union & Balkans

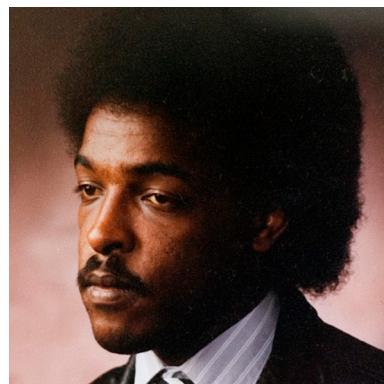
The news website *Bivol.bg* (Buffalo) that Assen Yordanov founded with Atanas Chobanov in October 2010 quickly made a name for itself with exclusives about corruption, flaws in the judicial system and collusion between politicians and organized crime in Bulgaria. A few months later, it became the official WikiLeaks partner for the publication of leaked US diplomatic cables about Bulgaria and its Balkan neighbours. In the summer of 2011, Yordanov began organizing courses for local journalists on protecting communications against the phone tapping and hacking that is often practiced by the Bulgarian authorities. The site survives thanks to the enthusiasm of its journalists and to fundraising initiatives. Advertisers obviously steer clear of it because they fear upsetting the powerful people targeted by its investigative reporting.



CLAUDIA DUQUE
Colombia / The Americas

There's no respite in Colombia for those who try to cover

enforced disappearances, the recruitment of child soldiers, the failure to punish crimes of violence and the infiltration of government services by paramilitary groups. Leading investigative journalist Claudia Duque has often found this to her cost since 2001, when she was kidnapped by officials with the Administrative Security Department (DAS), Colombia's main intelligence agency. After the DAS spied on her while pretending to protect her, she fled abroad from 2004 to 2006. Following her return, she and her 10-year-old daughter were the target of death threats in 2008, so she fled abroad again, returning later the same year. She continues to report for *Radio Nizkor*, Latin America's leading online human rights radio station.



DAWIT ISAAC
Eritrea / Africa

Is Dawit Isaac still alive? A journalist, poet and naturalized Swedish citizen, he returned to serve "free Eritrea" and to launch *Setit*, a pro-reform newspaper. But since his arrest in September 2001, he has been subjected to a slow death in the burning hot containers used for holding prisoners in Eiraeiro, a detention centre in Northern Red Sea province. Held without a trial, without a lawyer and without the right to visits, like thousands of government opponents and dozens of other journalists, of whom at least four have died in detention, he is one of the countless victims of Issayas Afewerki's monstrous regime, which reigns with impunity. In the deafening silence surrounding

Eritrea, hope of saving Isaac is slim. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights began examining his case in 2013.



RODNEY SIEH
Liberia / Africa

Rodney D. Sieh has seen a lot. In Liberia during the terrible civil war that began in 1989, where he would cover massacres from the front line for the Monrovia Daily News. In Gambia, where he sought refuge in 1992 and reported for his uncle Kenneth Best's Daily Observer newspaper about the deaths and disappearances that followed Yahya Jammeh's coup d'état. In London, where he fled in 1994 to escape the man who is still Gambia's dictator. In the United States, where he garnered journalism diplomas and worked for many newspapers. And back in Liberia, where he launched the country's most popular and hard-hitting news website and then newspaper, *FrontPage Africa*, in 2005. It's no surprise that its coverage of elite corruption and social injustices have brought him problems, including jail and a three-month ban in 2013. But he's used to it.



PETER JOHN JABAN Malaysia / Asia-Pacific

Known by the pseudonym of "Papa Orang Utan," Peter John Jaban is the voice of *Radio Free Sarawak*, a London-based shortwave radio station that broadcasts to local communities in the jungles of the Malaysian province of Sarawak, on the island of Borneo. A member of Sarawak's Iban community, Jaban already defied the authorities by turning his previous radio station into a forum for criticizing exploitation and expropriation of the native population by the associates of Sarawak's billionaire chief minister Taib Mahmud. *Radio Free Sarawak* has to operate clandestinely in Sarawak, where the authorities regard it as "seditious," jamming its broadcasts and hacking its website in an attempt to prevent it from spreading its "lies" and "poisoning the spirit of the people." Since returning to Sarawak in 2012, Jaban has lived in constant fear of being arrested but that doesn't stop him from commenting ironically: "I much appreciate the honour of this recognition, not least because it may be useful if I am arrested."



MARIYATH MOHAMED Maldives / Asia-Pacific

Your sister has hanged herself and we can help you do the same." This is the kind of threat that 29-year-old Mariyath Mohammed gets in return for her commitment to freely reported news. After a spell at HFM Radio, she joined Minivan News, one of Maldives' few independent news websites, in 2012. At a time of political turmoil, she set about shedding light on an explosive issue that all other media have carefully avoided – the growing influence of radical Islamist groups. During the first five months of 2013, she was constantly followed, threatened and attacked – on one occasion by men armed with a steel bar. But her resolve is unshaken. Her recent coverage of the sentence of 100 lashes that was passed on a 15-year-old girl shocked the international community and led to the sentence being rescinded.

was Anouzla who, in July 2013, revealed that a serial child rapist was among the 49 convicted Spaniards to get a royal pardon under an agreement with Spain's King Juan Carlos. He has also criticized King Mohammed's lavish spending and long absences, and the corruption among those around him. He says he is ready to pay the price of fighting against "the wall of fear."



ANABEL HERNÁNDEZ Mexico / The Americas

Despite her father's abduction and murder in December 2000, Anabel Hernández broke a story the following year that led to a major investigation into embezzlement at the highest level of government. Her coverage of this scandal, known as Toallagate, won her Mexico's National Journalism Award in 2002. She went on to spend five years researching *Los señores del Narco*, a book about the complicity of politicians, military and businessmen in the drug trade. It was a bestseller, with 100,000 copies sold in 2010, but resulted in her having to be assigned police bodyguards. However, the protection is far from perfect: her family and home have been attacked twice and some of her sources have been threatened, jailed or killed. Nowadays she reports for the magazine *Proceso* and the online newspaper *Reporte Indigo*.



ALI ANOUZLA Morocco / MENA

The editor of the Arabic-language version of the news website *Lakome*, Ali Anouzla was arrested in September 2013 just for posting a link to the blog of a journalist with the Spanish daily *El País* that in turn had a link to a video in which Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) threatened Morocco. Although released after five weeks, he still faces up to 20 years in prison under Morocco's anti-terrorism law. One more judicial headache for a journalist who has specialized in criticizing King Mohammed and his regime. It



MUHAMMAD BEKJANOV
Uzbekistan / Eastern Europe
and Central Asia

Muhammad Bekhanov is one of the world's longest held journalists. Until he had to flee abroad in 1994, he edited *Erk* (Freedom), a newspaper that was President Islam Karimov's leading media critic. After the government blaming a series of bombings in Tashkent in 1999 on pro-democracy groups as well as armed Islamists, it got the Ukrainian authorities to extradite him back to Uzbekistan, where he was tortured into signing a "confession" and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. When an Islamist militant said he was tortured into implicating Bekhanov, the authorities "reduced" Bekhanov's jail term to 13 years. But in January 2012, just days before he was due to be freed, he was given another four years and eight months in jail on a charge of disobeying prison officials. According to recent reports, he is now in a grim prison in the southern city of Kasan, deaf in one ear as a result of mistreatment and suffering from tuberculosis.



MAZEN DARWISH
Syria / MENA

Human rights lawyer Mazen Darwish's voice ceased to be heard more than two years ago in the Syrian hell that has already consumed more than 150,000 lives. He and his two assistants at the Syrian Centre for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), Hussein Ghareer and Hani Al-Zitani, are being held on terrorism charges because of their peaceful commitment to freedom of expression and information. Subjected to torture, mistreatment and denial of medical attention since their arrest on 16 February 2012, they are now being held in the central Damascus prison pending trial. Winner of the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Prize in 2012, Darwish had already been arrested by Bashar Al-Assad's police three times in the past. But, as he said at the time, "no prison is big enough to contain free speech."



ERIC TOPONA
Tchad / Africa

On 3 May 2013, World Press Freedom Day, radio journalist and human rights defender Eric Topona said media freedom was beginning to become a reality in Chad. But, three days later, he was arrested in a roundup of journalists and government opponents and spent more than 100 days in prison awaiting trial. The conditions in the prison were "atrocious," he reported afterwards. He finally got a three-year suspended jail sentence for "threatening constitutional order" and initially resumed his journalistic work on his release. But, in December 2013, he realized he could no longer continue working as a journalist

under President Idriss Déby and moved to the German city of Bonn, where has resumed his professional relationship with Deutsche Welle.



ISMAIL SAYMAZ
Turkey / Eastern Europe and
Central Asia

A reporter for the newspaper *Radikal*, Ismail Saymaz was covering a nationwide wave of demonstrations in the summer of 2013 when he found proof that it was shopkeepers and plainclothes policemen who had beaten a young protester to death in the western city of Eskisehir. As a result, he was threatened by the local prefect, who had said he could have been killed by other protesters. Saymaz is used to such threats. His articles and books have tackled all the most sensitive subjects, including the "deep state," the Ergenekon conspiracy and political manipulation of the judicial system. He has been sued around 20 times and has been the target of virulent verbal attacks by government officials and the far right. Despite a lively media landscape, independent journalism in Turkey needs a vocation. At least 131 journalists have been fired or forced to resign in 2013 and at least 13 are being held in connection with their reporting. Some have been held for several years.

DANISH KAROKHEL **Afghanistan / Asia-Pacific**

Promoting human rights, calling the government and elites to account and encouraging participation in public life – these are the three pillars of *Pajhwok Afghan News*, the independent news agency that Danish Karokhel created ten years ago. Under his leadership, PAN's Kabul headquarters and its eight regional bureaux produce an average of 40 dispatches a day in Pashto, Dari and English. "Reports that are accurate, timely, balanced, correctly sourced and corroborated and relevant to their public," his article of faith says. This is a challenge in any country but, even amid Afghanistan's chaos, Karokhel is up to the task.

ALI DILEM **Algérie / MENA**

Ali Dilem knows only too well that it's not easy to be a cartoonist in Algeria. He has long worked in difficult circumstances, drawing political cartoons for the Algerian daily newspaper *Liberté* and the TV5 program *Monde Kiosque*. He has regularly received death threats and has spent nine years in prison after being tried for defamation. In 2001, he had the dubious honour of seeing his name attached to a series of amendments to the Algerian criminal code that provide for prison sentences of up to a year for journalists. However, Dilem never gave up. His drawings have won some 20 international prizes including the 2005 Press Freedom Trophy awarded by France's Limousin Press Club and Reporters Without Borders. He was also appointed Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 2010.

QUEIRÓS ANASTÁCIO CHILUVIA **Angola / AAfrica**

Working illegally as a journalist was among the charges brought against Queirós Anastácio Chiluvia, news director of the opposition radio station

Despertar, in February this year. It all began when the journalist went past a police station in a suburb of Luanda when he heard calls for help from detainees in the cells. Having tried unsuccessfully to obtain information from the police officers, he recorded the prisoners' calls and broadcast them on his station's airwaves. They were asking for medical assistance for a fellow prisoner who was dying of tuberculosis in an overcrowded cell. Chiluvia was immediately arrested and brought before a judge who gave him a six-month suspended sentence for defamation, offending the police and working illegally as a journalist. That is the price paid by a journalist in Angola for using the media to try to save a life. Chiluvia is still involved with Despertar radio, an essential counterweight in a country where freedom of speech can be easily denied.

GERARD RYLE **Australia / Asia-Pacific**

It all begins with a revolutionary pill that you dissolve in the tank of your car, which was supposed to reduce fuel consumption and cut exhaust emissions to zero. It set off a gold rush. The Australian company that claimed to market it raised more than 100 million dollars. The scam was exposed by the Australian investigative journalist, Gerard Ryle. During his investigation he ran into the tax haven secrecy of the British Virgin Islands. At the time, he did not realize that he would be the one to break the secrecy. Soon after the results of his work were published, in summer 2011, the journalist received a mysterious package. It contained a hard disk containing 2.5 million files going back some 30 years and tracking the histories of offshore accounts of nearly 130,000 people living in 170 countries. It was a huge quantity of data, 170 times bigger than the release by WikiLeaks of diplomatic cables, known as Cablegate. Two years later, in 2013, Offshore Leaks was finally published, sending political

shockwaves around the world. The investigation was the result of a joint effort by journalists working in 46 different countries, coordinated by the International Consortium of Investigate Journalists which Lyle heads. Today he is the driving force behind a type of journalism that crosses borders and language barriers, and he embodies the future of investigative journalism worldwide.

JULIAN ASSANGE **Australia / Asia-Pacific**

Julian Assange divides opinion – some see him as an advocate of transparency, others as a terrorist. The reports published by WikiLeaks, created by Assange in 2006 and specialising in leaking government documents, have made him an enemy of the US government. In its War Logs, comprising hundreds of thousands of US documents about Afghanistan and the war in Iraq, WikiLeaks discloses human rights abuses by the US army under the Bush administration. Among them are photos of the deaths of two Reuters journalists killed by US troops in Kabul. In forcing governments to face their responsibilities by publishing such embarrassing information, Assange has become a symbolic victim of a system that too easily confuses journalism with terrorism. Holed up in the Ecuadorean embassy in London since August 2012, Assange says he believes in the transparency of the state but not in the transparency of individuals.

GANIMAT ZAHID

Azerbaijan / Eastern Europe
and Central Asia

Ganimat Zahid, who has already served two years and a half in prison on a ridiculous pretext, knows that freedom is hard-fought. The newspaper he runs, *Azadliq* ("freedom" in Azeri), is one of the last remaining opposition titles still standing in a ravaged media landscape. Squeezed by fines and deprived of income by the press distribution monopoly, it is struggling to survive. However, the fight itself was not the be-all and end-all for Zahid. In 2012 he undertook to break the wall of censorship that prevailed in Azerbaijan's broadcast media. With few resources he launched the television program "Azerbaijan Hour" which is broadcast by satellite for a few hours every week from abroad. The transmission was jammed and kicked off the satellite which first relayed it but, undeterred, Zahid managed to relaunch it. Since then, he has stayed away from Azerbaijan for the time being. The threats that made him decide to take his family out of the country seem unlikely to end soon.

KHADIJA ISMAÏLOVA

Azerbaijan / Eastern Europe
and Central Asia

Sentenced last year to sweep the streets for taking part in an unauthorized demonstration, investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova said with a smile she would be "cleaning this country of filth", something she was quite used to. Ismayilova is known for her in-depth investigations into corruption at the highest levels of government. These include the presidential clan's hold on the most profitable sectors of the economy and its investments in tax havens. A former head of the Azerbaijani service of *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, she works with a number of news organizations and her activities also extend to the international investigative journalism consortium, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting

Project. The personal risk is considerable. In 2012 and 2013 she was the target of a smear campaign and blackmail attempt using explicit video footage. In February this year, there was a change of tactics and she was accused of spying. According to the public prosecutor who questioned her for three days in succession, she was alleged to have passed on state secrets to the US Congress. However, it would take more than that to persuade her to call off her investigations.

MALAHAT NASIBOVA

Azerbaijan / Eastern Europe
and Central Asia

When journalists began interviewing the relatives of a man found dead at the local office of the Ministry of National Security (MNS) in the isolated region of Nakhchivan in August 2011, MNS officers intervened, grabbing at their microphones and cameras. One of the reporters, Malahat Nasibova of the independent news agency *Turan*, was branded an "enemy of the people." It was just the start. She received many death threats in the following weeks because of her obstinacy in pursuing the story. Exposed to all kinds of harassment during 15 years of fighting for freedom of information, she has never been deterred. In a region known as "Azerbaijan's North Korea" for its repression and lack of pluralism, she tackles any subject head-on including corruption, human rights violations, public health issues and electoral fraud. She also pursues all these issues through the Resources Centre for Democracy and NGO Development, which she created in 2002.

AHMED HUMEIDAN

Bahrain / MENA

Accusing a journalist of attacking a police station is unprecedented. But that's what happened to the 26-year-old photographer Ahmed Humeidan. He was arrested on 29

December 2012 for supposedly "storming" a police station on the small island of Sitra, in Bahrain, although he was not there at the time of the incident. This well-known photographer has languished in a cell ever since, subjected to death threats and psychological torture. No doctor has been allowed to examine him. He was given a 10-year jail sentence on 26 March 2014 – no doubt to show that Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has regained full control of the country and its media since the brutally repressed protests of 2011.

ALI ABDULEMAM

Bahrain / MENA

Ali Abdulemam is a pioneer. In 1999, he created *Bahrain Online*, his country's first pro-democracy forum and a very popular one. For his pains, he was arrested, beaten and tortured several times for "publishing false information." He was released for the last time on 23 February 2011, a week after a "Day of Anger" began a series of peaceful protests in Manama that ended up being crushed violently. A wary person, he fled just before the police came to his home to arrest him again. In June 2011, a military court sentenced him in absentia to 15 years on charges of conspiracy and participating in an attempted coup d'état. He now lives in exile in the United Kingdom, where he continues his fight.

ASIF MOHIUDDIN

Bangladesh / Asia-Pacific

"They wanted to take me to the town centre of Motijheel for a public lynching." "They" are activists of Hefazat-e-Islam, a coalition of fundamentalist madrasas supported by the Jamaat-e-Islami party. In May 2013, a million of them gathered in the centre of the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, to call for the death penalty for atheist and secular bloggers, who include the blogger Asif Mohiuddin. Big rewards were offered for anyone

who would behead them. Through his articles on religious fundamentalism, education policy, religious institutions, the oppression of women and the sharia, Mohiuddin evolved from free thinker to public enemy number one. He has been stabbed by extremists and detained several times by the authorities over his "blasphemous" blog posts. His blog has been censored and he could face up to 14 years in prison. However, he has not given up the fight. In exile for the moment, he is continuing his mission to inform the public.

ANDRZEJ POCZOBUT Belarus / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Describing Alexander Lukashenko as a dictator is risky. In the past decade some 10 people have received jail sentences for insulting the Belarussian head of state in this way. However, it is a matter of principle for Andrzej Poczobut to call a spade a spade. Between 2011 and 2012, the life of the Belarussian journalist, an ethnic Pole, has been punctuated by arrests, raids and summonses. The authorities accused him of taking part in pro-democracy protests in December 2010 which he was covering, and he was first fined then imprisoned for two weeks. During questioning he was beaten and his credentials were later seized. However, he continues to criticize the government in his stories for the Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, as well as on independent Belarussian news sites and in his own blog. He was remanded in custody for three months before being given a suspended three-year prison sentence for defamation in July 2011. He was arrested again the following year for writing columns criticizing the government's response to the bombing on the Minsk metro. He was cleared of these charges in March 2013 but his suspended sentence remained in effect and he was banned from leaving the country until the sentence was lifted last

autumn for "good behaviour". As a gesture of defiance, the journalist took advantage of this to travel to Warsaw to launch his scathing book about the rise to power and reign of Lukashenko entitled "The Belarus System".

ZHANNA LITVINA Belarus / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The name Zhanna Litvina is familiar among the independent journalists still left in Belarus. The Belarus Association of Journalists (BAJ), which she founded in 1995, has provided critical support, such as legal assistance, documentation of press freedom violations, vocational training, advocacy for legislative reform, in the face of daily abuses by "Europe's last dictatorship". The BAJ's tireless struggle has earned it numerous awards, including the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize, and Litvina is its perfect incarnation. She was editor at a state radio station during the years of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union and set a new, liberal tone. The station was closed down on the eve of the presidential election in 1995, which swept Alexander Lukashenko to power. Litvina then launched her own privately owned radio station, and when this, too, was taken off air, she began broadcasting from Poland. Being president of the BAJ is no easy matter. In an atmosphere of growing repression, Litvina was the target of a smear campaign on state television in February 2012. In the ensuing months, she was banned from leaving the country. However, the BAJ pursued its unequal struggle. Today it has more than 1,000 members and five regional branches, as well as its head office in Minsk.

LÚCIO FLÁVIO PINTO Brazil / The Americas

For more than 25 years, Lúcio Flávio Pinto has been the one-man editorial team of *Jornal Pessoal* (Personal Newspaper), a fearless, ad-less 12-page

bimonthly that he writes and distributes on the streets of Belém, in the northern state of Pará. Trained as a sociologist and stubborn journalist by conviction, he stormed out of the daily *O Liberal* in 1987 when it refused to print his investigative piece on the implication of two businessmen in a parliamentarian's murder. After exposing *O Liberal's* murky finances in 2005, he was beaten up by the owner's son and then the courts prevented him from following their trial on tax evasion charges. But death threats and more than 30 lawsuits have not stopped him from continuing to write about drug trafficking, deforestation and corruption.

HASSAN RUVAKUKI Burundi / Africa

Hassan Ruvakuki is among those journalists who are not afraid to get close to the story. He works as a correspondent for the Swahili service of *Radio France Internationale* and as a reporter for the local station *Bonesha FM*. In November 2011, he took it upon himself to cover the formation of a new Burundian rebel group. He was subsequently accused by the authorities of being a member of the group and was sentenced to life imprisonment for "participating in terrorist activity". His sentence was reduced to three years on appeal and the charge was downgraded to "participating in an association formed with the aim of attacking persons and property" after he won support from civil society organizations, African news organizations and international NGOs including Reporters Without Borders. In March last year he was released on parole after spending 15 months in prison. The name of this hero of the press has not yet been officially cleared.

OUDOM TAT
Cambodia / Asia-Pacific

Oudom Tat has taken an interest in journalism and photography ever since he was a boy delivering newspapers in Phnom Penh. After working for an NGO, he became a fixer for foreign reporters, especially those who wanted to cover land conflicts in the capital and provinces. In 2011, he joined *Voice of Democracy*, one of the few independent radio stations that dare to criticize the government. Working as a photojournalist, he covered many sensitive stories that the government would rather conceal, such as conditions for workers in Cambodia's key garment sector, protests by people evicted from their land, or campaigns for land rights. As a result of his reporting and dedication, he has been threatened and attacked repeatedly since the start of 2013, both by unidentified men in civilian dress and government officials. Despite the danger, he is more determined than ever to promote justice and human rights in Cambodia.

MARÍA PÍA MATTÁ
Chile / The Americas

Maria Pía Matta is a campaigner for the rights of women and indigenous groups and for more than 20 years has personified the independent station Radio Tierra, which broadcasts from Santiago with the goal of strengthening social dialogue among local communities. In 2003 she was appointed Vice-President of the South American branch of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC). She carries out fact-finding missions on freedom of expression in areas of conflict in Colombia, Haiti and Venezuela. In Chile, she does similar work in areas dominated by traditional Mapuche culture. Her commitment has made her a pioneer campaigner on behalf of community radio and TV stations, which have become beacons of freedom of expression in South America. Matta became

international president of the AMARC in 2010 and helps to develop the right to information and promote dialogue between civil society and governments.

MIREYA MANQUEPILLÁN HUANQUIL
Chile / The Americas

A member of the Mapuche indigenous community, like 4 per cent of Chileans, Mireya Manquepillán has been prosecuted for using an unauthorized frequency as the manager of *Kimche Mapu*, a community radio station covering the Los Ríos region, 800 km south of Santiago. She testified to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in August 2013 that her case reflected the plight of indigenous communities in Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. The Chilean government immediately announced an indigenous broadcasting plan for 2014-16. But the promised creation of 30 new radio stations, 10 million pesos (15,000 euros) in funding and a pilot project with *Kimche Mapu* have yet to materialize. "It was just an announcement to make an impact, and nothing more," Mireya said.

HUANG QI
China / Asia-Pacific

Creator of China's first human rights news website in 1998 and winner of the Reporters Without Borders Cyber-Freedom Prize in 2004, Huang Qi has spent eight of the past 14 years in prison. He was jailed in 2000 for "inciting subversion" and again in 2008 on a charge of "possessing state secrets", for gathering information to help parents of the victims of the Sichuan earthquake. With the help of thousands of volunteers, his *64tianwang.com* website has done extraordinary work over the past 16 years, publishing information about tens of thousands of human rights violations and helping to win at least 10 billion yuan (more than a billion euros) in compensation

for victims throughout China. Seven of the site's contributors are currently detained and Huang himself is the target of a new investigation orchestrated by the Beijing public security department. But, despite close surveillance, he continues to work tirelessly to bring justice to his compatriots.

LI JIANJUN
China / Asia-Pacific

For the past 10 years, Li Jianjun has been waging a battle against corruption in China. Li, 36, began working as an investigative journalist in his home province of Shanxi in the north of the country, where he exposed cases of corruption in the police. He was sacked in 2011 but didn't back down. Between 2012 and 2013, he took on the head of the state-owned conglomerate China Resources Holdings Co, Song Lin. Despite death threats and kidnap attempts, Li even took a minority shareholding in the company as part of his investigation. In April 2013, he highlighted irregularities in contracts signed between China Resources Holdings Co and three mining companies in Shanxi. "They must go down and go to jail," Li has said. "Only then could I feel safe, and I would be making a big service for public interests as well." Following an investigation by the Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, Song Lin was removed from office on April 19.

LIU HU
China / Asia-Pacific

Police stormed into the home of Liu Hu, a journalist with the Guangzhou-based *Modern Express daily*, on 24 August 2013, took him off to Beijing, and put him in Detention Centre No. 1, which is usually reserved for the most dangerous criminals. After 37 days, the maximum for provisional detention, he was formally charged with defamation, his bail request was rejected and one of his lawyers was placed under disciplinary investigation for posting documents linked to the case online. The reason for this nightmarish scenario? Liu had posted information about embezzlement by a local official, Ma Zhengqi, on his personal page on the Weibo social network because he knew that censorship would prevent its publication in the newspaper. This was too much for the party. What with the information Liu had already posted on Weibo about other cases, including the president of the Shanghai supreme court and the head of the Shaanxi province public security department, he was now a menace to be silenced at once.

JIGME GYATSO
Tibet / Asia-Pacific

Jigme Gyatso, also known as Golog Jigme, is a Buddhist monk and human rights activist who found fame with the film "Leaving Fear Behind" which he made with the farmer and filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen. The powerful 25-minute documentary consists of interviews with 108 ordinary Tibetans and had a secret screening in Beijing on the opening day of the Olympic Games in 2008 before being shown throughout the world. Jigme Gyatso was immediately arrested, sentenced to seven months' imprisonment, then beaten and tortured. He was released in October 2008. However, in 2012 Jigme Gyatso, described by fellow Tibetans as "monk of moral integrity and a sincere social worker", was seized again by the authorities,

who are holding him in secret. His family have had no news of him since September 2012.

ANGEL SANTIESTEBAN-PRATZ
Cuba / The Americas

His blog is called "Los hijos que nadie quiso" (The children no one wanted). The writer and netizen Ángel Santiesteban-Prats has been held for more than a year for openly criticizing the "dictator" Raúl Castro, as he calls him. Convicted on trumped-up charges of "home violation" and "injuries" in a summary trial on 8 December 2012, he was sentenced to five years in prison. In April 2013, he was transferred to a prison in the Havana suburb of San Miguel del Padrón where he has been subjected to mistreatment and acts of torture. His novel "El verano en que Dios dormía" (The summer God slept) received the 2013 Franz Kafka Drawer Novel Prize, awarded in Prague to unpublished Cuban novels.

YOANI SANCHEZ
Cuba / The Americas

A philologist by training, Yoani Sánchez is a celebrity in her own country and internationally. Time Magazine ranked her as one of the world's 100 most influential people in 2008. Her Generación Y blog, launched in 2007 with the aim of "helping to build a plural Cuba," covers the economic and social problems that ordinary Cubans constantly face. Like other bloggers, she has been subjected to varied insults (such as "contemptible parasites"), intermittent blocking and judicial harassment. In early 2014, she announced her intention to create an independent collective media platform in Cuba. "The worst could happen on the first day, but perhaps we will sow the first seeds of a free press in Cuba," she said.

MAYDANEH ABDALLAH OKIEH
Djibouti / Africa

Maydaneh Abdallah Okieh is one of the mainstays of the first independent radio station in Djibouti's recent history, *La Voix de Djibouti*. He is reporter, interviewer and editor of its website and the government of President Ismail Omar Guelleh has had him in its sights on many occasions. He was jailed three times between March last year and March this year, held each time in Gabode central prison. He was accused of posting images of police violence on his Facebook page and of covering an opposition demonstration, both of which enshrine the right of the public to be informed but which annoyed the Djibouti dictatorship. Despite being ill-treated in prison, he was refused access to a doctor several times. For the time being he is free, but who knows what tomorrow may bring.

WALEED AL-SHEHHI
United Arab Emirates / MENA

A sentence of two years in prison and a fine of 500,000 dirhams (100,000 euros) – Waleed Al-Shehhi, a netizen based in Ajman, in the United Arab Emirates, has paid dearly for a few tweets about the trial of 94 Emiratis, most of whom were convicted of endangering the country's security for having links with an Islamist organization. Arrested in May 2013, Shehhi was convicted under the UAE's cyber-crime law, which forbids the use of information technology for activities "harming the reputation of the state." His crime was informing the general public about this trial, from which the international media were excluded, and about the torture of the detainees. Shehhi was himself mistreated and repeatedly threatened with physical torture.

ABEER SAADY
Egypt / MENA

Well known in the Egyptian media, Abeer Saady has been writing constantly in Arabic and English on the most important subjects for the past 23 years. Whether at the Libyan war front or on the streets of Cairo, she seems to be everywhere. Hundreds of journalists throughout the Middle East know her, as she has given safety training to journalists working in hostile areas in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, Bahrain and elsewhere. As well as being deputy editor of the daily *Al-Akhbar*, she has been elected vice-president and member of the board of the Egyptian Journalists Syndicate for three terms, and ran its training department, hosting seminars and training sessions. But now she has had enough. Publicly criticizing the union's silence in the face of all the arrests, violence and murders targeting journalists, she has announced that she is freezing her involvement. She urged her colleagues to consider the "catastrophic ramifications of

silence in response to this attack on the safety, security and dignity of journalists." Twelve journalists have been killed in Egypt since 2011 and more than 20 are currently detained.

BINIAM SIMON
Eritrea / Africa

Biniam Simon was a government TV presenter in Eritrea, a little-known corner of the Horn of Africa that may have become one of the world's worst dictatorships under Issayas Afewerki. Around 10,000 political prisoners, including some 30 journalists, are held in terrible conditions and many have died in detention. Simon fled to France and, since 2009, has presented *Radio Erena* (Our Eritrea), a Paris-based radio station that broadcasts to Eritrea by satellite, shortwavesj and online (although less than 4 percent of the population has an Internet connection). Using a network of correspondents of unparalleled courage, he provides reliable and independently reported news, despite intermittent jamming. His listeners know that, by listening to the station, they risk ending up in the hell of Eritrea's jails.

YIRGALEM FISSEHA
MEBRAHTU
Eritrea / Africa

Yirgalem Fisseha Mebrahtu is one of the few women to have entered what is the dangerous profession of journalism in Eritrea. After the government closed all independent media in 2001, she worked for radio Bana until the authorities raided it in February 2009, arrested all the staff and took them to Adi Abeito military prison. She has now spent more than five years in May Srwa prison, where she has been subjected to inhuman conditions, including an entire year in solitary confinement, and is in very poor health. She has been hospitalized three times without her family being informed. President Issayas Afewerki's government, which has already allowed at least four

journalists to die in detention, is now playing dangerously with this journalist's life.

GORKA LANDÁBURU
Spain / European union & Balkans

On 15 May 2001, the journalist Gorka Landáburu received a package at his home in Zarauz, a town in Spain's northern Basque Country. It appeared to have been sent by a business association. When he opened it, 150 grams of Titadine, a compressed dynamite used in mining and by the Basque armed separatist group ETA for its bombs, exploded in his face. He will bear the marks for the rest of his life. In its communiqué claiming the attack, ETA called him a "txakurra de la pluma," meaning a dog in the service of the Spanish government. When those responsible were tried ten years later, Landáburu testified in court: "I am a journalist. You destroyed my hands. My left eye no longer sees anything. Scars cover my body. But you failed because you did not cut my tongue out." Long protected by bodyguards, he is now the editor of the Madrid-based news weekly *Cambio 16*.

REYOT ALEMU

Ethiopia / Africa

It was in Addis Ababa's appalling Kality prison that Reyot Alemu learned that she had won the 2013 UNESCO world press freedom prize. She has been there since June 2011 serving a 14-year sentence (later reduced to five) on a charge of "participating in, promoting and communicating a terrorist act." A columnist on political and social issues for the national weekly *Fitih*, she is one of the many journalists and government opponents who have been convicted on terrorism charges. A colleague remembers seeing her leave the Addis Ababa lawcourts, proudly clutching copies of her articles as evidence of her work. She has been let out of prison once, for an operation to a malign tumour, but was sent back to her cell immediately afterwards, with no chance of convalescing in fresh air.

DINA DASKALOPOULOU

Greece / European union & Balkans

There was a national and international outcry when the three TV stations operated by *Elliniki Radiofonía Tileórasi (ERT)*, Greece's public broadcaster, stopped broadcasting at 10:11 p.m. on 11 June 2013. There was also a big response from *Oι Ergazomenoi* (The Workers), a self-managed "strike newspaper" that emerged from the collapse of the leading daily *Eleftherotypia* (Free Press) in 2012 and now has a print run of about 10,000 copies. Dina Daskalopoulou, who works for the same salary as all of its employees including the managing editor (800 euros a month), strayed from her usual stories – prostitution and the conditions of immigrant women – to provide detailed coverage of this major attack on media pluralism, although she acknowledges that "*ERT* was Greece's most corrupt and dysfunctional entity."

ILEANA ALAMILLA

Guatemala / The Americas

A lawyer by training and journalist by vocation, Ileana Alamilla fled Guatemala in 1979 and did not return until 1998, spending almost 20 years in exile in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Salvador and Mexico. It was in exile in 1983 that she founded Cerigua (Centro de Reportes Informativos Sobre Guatemala) to "break through Guatemala's international isolation and draw attention to the terror and crimes against its population." As such, she supported the 1996 peace accords that ended a 36-year civil war. She campaigns for the creation of a national system to protect journalists and, through Cerigua, has been condemning an unprecedented wave of violence against media personnel.

GOTSON PIERRE

Haiti / The Americas

After the 2010 earthquake, Haitian journalist and PR consultant Gotson Pierre realized his main priority should be to compensate for the lack of news and information. The disaster devastated the country, destroying the homes of more than 1.5 million Haitians who were forced to find shelter in survivor camps dotted throughout the capital, Port-au-Prince. The day after the tremor, Pierre set up a mobile Telecentre among the ruins for those who had been displaced. Equipped with a dozen Web-connected computers, it tours the capital's six survivor camps every day. The Telecentre is an oasis for exchanging information amid a ruined infrastructure and media. It is used for exchanging information about victims of the quake, its aftermath and the distribution of humanitarian aid. It has also been a means of introducing many Haitians to new technology.

DINA MEZA

Honduras / The Americas

Presenter of the radio programme "Voces contra el Olvido" (Voices against Forgetting) and editor of the *Defensores en Línea* website, Dina Meza has been spied on, followed and threatened with violence and death almost without interruption for the past eight years, and had to flee abroad for several months in 2013. Her country is a living hell for journalists. Fourteen have been killed with complete impunity in the past ten years, 13 of them since the June 2009 coup d'état. Subjects such as human rights violations, mining or the "purge" of the police seem to result in automatic reprisals. Meza also covers the equally sensitive subject of agrarian conflicts. "Am I afraid?" she says. "My biggest problem is that I am afraid of doing nothing and my children need a different country."

ITSMANIA PINEDA PLATERO

Honduras / The Americas

The founder of Xibalba Arte y Cultura, an NGO specializing in the causes of crime and rehabilitating young offenders, the journalist Itsmania Pineda is constantly threatened online ("We're going to dismember you alive, you slut!"), her email and blog have been hacked, she has been prevented from moving about freely and she has had to close the office of her NGO. Each time, she filed a report with the police but nothing has been done although the police were told to provide her with protection. As part of the ongoing "purge" of the Honduran police, two senior officers responsible for her protection were relieved of her duties and a third was murdered shortly thereafter. Responsibility for her protection then fell to a junior officer she had previously accused of criminal activity!

TONGAM RINA India / Asia-Pacific

Not even bullets can silence Tongam Rina --- in July 2012 she received one in the stomach which grazed her spinal cord. A gunman and his accomplices waited for her at the entrance to the *Arunachal Times* in Itanagal, the capital of Arunachal Pradesh state. Almost 2 years later, the man assumed to be behind the attack was arrested and later released. The reason invoked, but never confirmed: Rina, the newspaper's associate editor, had not highlighted him and his activities in her paper. Now recovered from her injuries, she continues her fight against endemic corruption and against the 150 dam projects in the pipeline in the border region.

ADNAN HASSANPOUR Iran / MENA

The "dean" of Iran's imprisoned journalists, Adnan Hass nanopour was the editor of *Asou* (Horizon), a now closed weekly, in Marivan, in a western region where most of the population is Kurdish. A Marivan revolutionary court sentenced him to death in 2007 on charges of spying, separatist propaganda and subversive activities against national security. Thanks to his lawyer, and international pressure, the supreme court overturned the death sentence in 2008 after deciding he could not be regarded as *mohareb* (an enemy of God). When retried, he was finally sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2009. He is in poor health and, according to the latest news, he has been sent to Zahedan prison in the northeastern province of Sistan. So now he is serving a double sentence – imprisonment and exile.

JILA BANI YAGHOOB Iran / MENA

Jila Bani Yaghoob, a journalist who runs the *Kanoon Zanan Irani* (Centre for Iranian Women) website, is supposed to remain

silent until 2040. When a Tehran court convicted her in 2010 of "anti-system propaganda" and "insulting the president," it sentenced her to a year in prison and a 30-year ban on journalistic work. The first part of the sentence began when she went to prison in 2012 and the second part when she was freed in 2013. That wasn't her first brush with prison. After being arrested at an International Women's Day meeting on 8 March 2009, she spent a week blindfolded in Tehran's notorious Evin prison, an experience on which she based a book published abroad. She is also used to being silenced, having spent her career leaving one newspaper after it was closed by the authorities to go to work for another one that would soon be closed. "I wonder how many people in the world are interested in my work, my people and my country," she asks.

SAID MATINPOUR Iran / MENA

Said Matinpour, a journalist with the weekly Azeri-language newspaper *Yarpagh*, is among the media workers who have spent the longest time in the jails of Iran. A Tehran revolutionary court sentenced him to eight years' imprisonment in 2009 for anti-government propaganda and «maintaining relations with foreigners». Two years earlier, he was detained in the notorious Evin prison and was released nine months later after the payment of an exorbitant fine of 500,000 euros. Matinpour has suffered health problems as a result of the first term he served in Evin. Deprived of his freedom and denied medical treatment, he wages a daily battle for his rights and those of the other prisoners and has become a leading figure in the fight against the deplorable conditions in which prisoners of conscience are held.

SIAMAK QADERI Iran / MENA

Four years in prison and 60 lashes. That's the sentence

that the journalist and blogger Siamak Qaderi received in January 2011 after being fired by the government news agency *IRNA*. He was convicted of using his blog to disseminate anti-government propaganda and false information "liable to disrupt public order." His crime was not just investigating the everyday lives of his fellow citizens and criticizing government policies. Above all, it was interviewing gays and posting the results of his interviews on his blog. Because, since President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's famous comment during a visit to the United States in September 2007, everyone knows that "there are no homosexuals in Iran."

AMIRA HASS Israel/ MENA

Amira Hass is the only Jewish Israeli journalist to have lived among the Palestinians in Gaza and Ramallah since 1993. She thinks it is as necessary as "covering Britain from London, and France from Paris." Her reports for the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, which she says «cannot be objective, just as any reporting about wrong-doing cannot be objective,» have won her enemies in all camps. Forced by Hamas to leave Gaza earlier than planned, in 2008, (though permitted to return two months later) she was detained in Israel twice (in 2008 and 2009) for entering Gaza without a permit and staying in an «enemy entity.» In 2013, the Yesha Council (of settlers in "Judea, Samaria and Gaza") accused her of inciting violence because she had written that Palestinians had the right to resist and had grounds for throwing stones. She was awarded the Reporters Without Borders/FNAC Prize in 2009 for her independent and outspoken journalism and, in particular, the quality of her reporting for *Ha'aretz* during and immediately after Israel's Operation Cast Lead offensive against the Gaza Strip in December 2008 and January 2009. Accepting the award, she said: "Being an independent journalist

is not that hard in Israel but for this independence to be real and effective, two conditions are needed. A newspaper ready to publish the articles and readers. I was lucky to have a newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, ready to publish, and the support of my editors, especially the news editor. But Israeli readers find it hard to accept a different version of events from what the authorities offer."

GIUSEPPE MANIACI

Italy / European union & Balkans

Giuseppe "Pino" Maniaci runs *Telejato*, a small "anti-mafia TV station," from an apartment in Partinico, a suburb of the Sicilian capital of Palermo. A former building contractor, he was prosecuted in 2009 on a charge of working illegally as a journalist, and won the case by invoking the constitutional right to freely express his opinions. He has been sued hundreds of times and repeatedly threatened, and was once beaten up by a mafia boss's son. Since moving his community TV station online, he broadcasts for two hours a day, covering the murders and racketeering that are a part of Sicily's everyday life. The station's future is assured because all of his family participate, including his daughter Letizia, who has received a young journalist's award. "To be a journalist in Sicily, you need balls of steel, not a press card," he says.

LIRIO ABBATE

Italy / European union & Balkans

Now the Sicily correspondent of the weekly *Espresso* and the daily *La Stampa* after years of working for the Italian news agency *ANSA*, Lirio Abbate is an expert on organized crime, especially the Sicilian variety. After being the only journalist present at the arrest of Bernardo Provenzano, Cosa Nostra's "capo di tutti capi," in April 2006, he wrote a book the following

year entitled */ Complici* (The Accomplices), about the close links between politicians and mafiosi. He has never been alone since then. He and his wife have a permanent police escort. But the death threats and his presence on Cosa Nostra's blacklist have not intimidated him. He still lives in Palermo and had another book published last year entitled *Fimmire ribelli*, about the "rebel women" who resist Calabria's feared 'Ndrangheta.

YU TERASAWA

Japan / Asia-Pacific

Yu Terasawa has few friends in the Japanese police. He was still a student when he began his career in journalism by exposing police corruption. More than 20 years later, about 100 agents and officers have been fired, prosecuted or subjected to disciplinary action as a result of the countless articles and books he has written on the subject. In 2006 a film entitled "Pochi no Kokuhaku" ("Confessions of a Dog") based on his writings was released. Naturally, that got him into trouble. "I was beaten, followed, robbed, arrested without a warrant," he said. At the same time, he also took on that most Japanese of institutions, Kisha Clubs, associations of newspapers companies and Tv stations with exclusive – and often complicit – access to press conferences and official sources. Even among his own colleagues, not everyone is a friend... On 28 March this year, he launched legal proceedings against the government after a law on state secrets was introduced, a major attack on investigative journalism.

LUKPAN AKHMEDYAROV

Kazakhstan / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

An investigative journalist based in the northwestern city of Uralsk, Lukpan Akhmedyarov, 38, is well known for covering corruption and human rights abuses by President Nursultan Nazarbayev's autocratic regime for the regional weekly *Uralskaya*

Nedelia. He narrowly survived an apparent murder attempt outside his apartment on the night of 19 April 2012, when he was beaten, repeatedly stabbed and shot with an air-pistol. This attack had been preceded by many intimidation attempts, including a series of lawsuits with demands for astronomic damages. Winner of the Peter Mackler Award for Courageous and Ethical Journalism in October 2012, he is now *Uralskaya Nedelia*'s editor.

SARDAR MUHAMMAD

Iraqi Kurdistan / MENA

Sardar Muhammad is a pioneer of independent journalism in Iraqi Kurdistan. He worked for the very first independent newspaper in the autonomous region, Hawlati, founded in 2000, and he was among those who launched the newspaper Awene in January 2006, of which he is now the editor. The paper has become an institution in the region and its journalists are forced to wage a daily battle to ensure their independence and safety. One of the paper's contributors, Kawa Germyani, was murdered last December in Sulaymaniyah, the third journalist to be murdered in Iraqi Kurdistan since 2008. Despite the climate of violence, Muhammad and his staff battle every day to make freedom of information in Iraqi Kurdistan a reality.

AMARA AL-KHITABI

Libya / MENA

The editor of the privately-owned Tripoli newspaper *Al-Umma*, Amara Al-Khitabi is a victim of Libya's penal code and, in particular, article 195, which remains in effect although it is very repressive. Aged 67, he was arrested on 21 November 2012 and was held for more than four months, becoming the first Libyan journalist to be jailed after the fall of the Gaddafi regime. His crime was publishing a list of 87 judges and prosecutors suspected of corruption and then refusing to reveal his source. Charged with libel and "insulting the judicial system," he faced a sentence of 3 to 15 years in prison under article 195. Although in poor health, he went on hunger strike. After being released, he was initially forbidden to leave the country to seek treatment. It was only on 21 August 2013 that he was allowed to travel to Jordan. Article 195 was recently amended, but only to adapt it to the post-Gaddafi era. It remains as draconian as ever and Khitabi is still facing a possible 15-year sentence.

HANAN AL-MQAWAB

Libya / MENA

A 34-year-old Libyan woman from Benghazi, Hanan Al-Mqaqab was forged in the fire of the revolution. Soon after the start of the uprising, she began working as a citizen-journalist for the Media Centre, an *ad hoc* organization created to cover events in the east of the country. She soon went on to work for radio Benghazi Mahali, presenting reports on the humanitarian situation, and then *Shabab Libya FM*, where she covered the situation of women and hosted a very popular programme called *Isma'una* (Listen to us), the first to talk openly about the abuses being committed by the militias. Its reports linking armed groups to egregious human rights violations led to a major demonstration on 21 September

2012 called "Save Benghazi." The resulting threats of death or abduction were too much even for Mqaqab and her commitment to journalism and political activism. She finally fled abroad and continues to be a journalist in exile.

MALICK ALI MAIGA

Mali / Africa

Malick Ali Maiga was a presenter for *Adar Koima* (Joy of the Hill), the last of the six radio stations in the northern city of Gao to keep going after the rebel MUJAO and MNLA groups took the city in March 2012 and repeatedly threatened its journalists. He drove around at night and saw these self-styled men of God committing abuses and trafficking in drugs. In May 2012, MNLA members gave him a severe beating and "advised" him to refer to Azawad ("liberated" northern Mali) in more positive terms. After residents helped to free him, he continued to provide news coverage for the city he loves so much "Gao is home for me (...) everyone there is my family." He was attacked again in August 2012, this time by MUJAO members, after reporting on the air that a protest had prevented the amputation of a youth's hand for theft. He was beaten with rifle butts for two hours and left unconscious outside Gao's hospital. After that, he finally fled to the safety of Bamako. But the Islamists did not weaken his resolve and he continues to work as a journalist in the capital.

SAOUTI HAÏDARA

Mali / Africa

The photos of Saouti Haïdara, the 62-year-old dean of Mali's press corps, on a hospital bed with his face swollen and his arm in plaster, went round Africa and prompted a one-day protest strike by the Malian media. It happened on 12 July 2012, two months after intelligence officers interrogated him about his sources. A dozen armed men kidnapped him from the

headquarters of *L'Indépendant*, the newspaper he runs in Bamako, beat him with clubs and rifle butts, and threatened to kill him if he filed a complaint. He was found at a roadside later that night by colleagues, who took him to hospital. The violence inflicted on this respected journalist testified to the decline in Mali, formerly seen as a regional model of respect for freedom of information.

ALI LMRABET

Morocco / MENA

Ali Lmrabet has been gagged in his country since 2005, when he was sentenced to a 10-year-ban on working as journalist for writing in a report for the Spanish daily *El Mundo* that the Sahrawis living in camps on the outskirts of the Algerian town of Tindouf were "refugees" and not "hostages" held against their will, as the Moroccan government tends to claim. The Moroccan penal code makes no provision for such a ban. He was previously sentenced in 2003 to three years in prison on a charge of "undermining respect for the king" for publishing cartoons of the monarchy and an interview with a left-wing former prisoner (calling himself as a "republican") in his weekly *Demain*. After being held for eight months and staging a hunger strike for 50 days, he was released on a pardon from King Mohammed in January 2004. Nowadays, he lives in the northern city of Tétouan and, since 2011, has edited the *Demain Online* website, defying the ban on journalistic work. "Without censorship or self-censorship, except as regards people's honour and dignity," he says.

LYDIA CACHO
Mexico / The Americas

Lydia Cacho's coverage of violence and sexual abuse affecting women and children has won her many international awards such as the Wallenberg Medal, the Olof Palme prize and the UNESCO press freedom prize. But it has also brought her a lot of trouble in Mexico, including a rape linked to her reporting in 1999, an arrest in 2005 after the publication of her book *Demonios del Eden* (which helped bring down a major paedophile ring), an abortive plan by Puebla's governor to have her beaten and jailed in 2006, the sabotaging of her car in 2008, and being forced to flee abroad temporarily in 2011. But all this failed to prevent her from producing a new book in 2013 entitled *Esclavas del Poder*, which is about sexual slavery worldwide.

VERÓNICA BASURTO
Mexico / The Americas

Covering police investigations is undoubtedly one of the most important activities carried out by journalists in Mexico. Verónica Basurto, a freelance working in Mexico City, took on the task of shedding light on several cases of corruption and impunity. Working with French journalist Laurence Cuivillier of the TV news channel France24 , she looked into the case of Hugo Alberto Wallace, who was murdered in 2005, and the abduction of a French citizen, Florence Cassez. She was repeatedly threatened by members of organized crime gangs and also had to do battle with a hostile justice system. A climate of tension forced her to move house regularly before finally going abroad. Her year's exile in Spain is a clear indictment of the failings of the Federal Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists created by the Mexican government in October 2012. Nonetheless, Basurto decided to return home and continue her investigative work.

MILKA TADIC MIJOVIC
Montenegro / European union & Balkans

Even before the collapse of Tito's Yugoslavia, Milka Tadic Mijovic was involved with one of the pioneers of democracy in the Balkans, the *Monitor*, Montenegro's first independent weekly. Her articles defending peace and ethnic minorities and combatting corruption won recognition internationally and trouble at home. She was the first journalist to be fired for criticizing Milosevic's aggressive policies. Since 2006, when Montenegro became independent, her problems have increased and have included physical threats, financial pressures and judicial harassment. Now the editor of the *Monitor*, she shares a sad privilege with the dailies *Vijesti* and *Dan*, that of having paid more than 300,000 euros in damages in the past few years.

MUTABAR TADJIBAYEVA
Uzbekistan / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Six years ago, Mutabar Tadjibayeva was fighting for her life in an Uzbek prison. While jailed from October 2005 to June 2008, this independent journalist and human rights right defender spent more than 100 days in solitary and was subjected to monstrous forms of mistreatment for refusing to sign a confession. Her crime? Documenting human rights violations by the Uzbek authorities for several years, defending their victims and, above all, investigating the 2005 Andijan massacre, in which hundreds died when soldiers opened fire on protesters. Freed in 2008 after being given the Martin Ennals Award, she now lives in France. Despite a new smear campaign, she has not lost any of her combative ness, running an NGO called the "Fiery Hearts Club", which has launched the news site Jarayon. Using a vast network of citizen-journalists and local activists, this trilingual site is one of the few sources of independent

information about Uzbekistan and its neighbours.

HAMID MIR
Pakistan / Asia-Pacific

Hamid Mir is a star – a star reporter, TV anchor, terrorism expert and security analyst. He has been fired twice, as a young reporter and as the Daily Pakistan's editor, for articles implicating Pakistani leaders in corruption. He help launched the Daily Ausaf in Islamabad in 1997, interviewed Osama Bin Laden twice (before and after 9/11), and has hosted Capital Talk, a popular political talk show on Geo TV, since 2002. His stellar status has won him many international awards but also police harassment, political hostility (President Musharraf banned from TV for four months in 2007-2008) and repeated accusations of being a Taliban sympathiser. The Taliban dispelled those suspicions by putting a bomb under his car in November after he defended the schoolgirl activist Malala Yousafzai. Fortunately it was defused before it could go off. Mir was shot several times by four men on motorcycles on the outskirts of Karachi on 19 April 2014.

MUHAMMED ZIAUDDIN**Pakistan / Asia-Pacific**

Muhammad Ziauddin is an elder statesman of Pakistani journalism, with a 45-year career behind him. He served as president of the South Asian Free Media Association from 2002 to 2006 and is now executive editor of *The Express Tribune*. Since its launch, the English-language newspaper has adopted an unflinchingly liberal tone, whether reporting on religious extremism or gay rights. This has earned it many critics. Last December, the staff were terrified by a grenade attack and brief shootout. In Karachi in January this year, three of them were shot dead in cold blood by a Taliban group unhappy with the paper's editorial line.

MABEL CÁCERES**Peru / The Americas**

Mabel Cáceres was already an experienced journalist when she launched the weekly *EI Buho* (The Owl) in Arequipa, Peru's second largest city, in 2000. The stories she covers in detail include endemic corruption, illicit enrichment and the reconstruction of a regional "Fujimorist" apparatus (by the allies of former President Alberto Fujimori, who was sentenced in 2009 to 25 years in prison for murder, drug trafficking and other crimes). She has been the target of no fewer than 13 lawsuits in the past two years, which must be a record in Latin America. In spite of the protection provided by a Peruvian NGO, she keeps receiving frequent death threats.

ROWENA PARAAN**Philippines / Asia-Pacific**

Rowena Paraan has been a journalist for more than 25 years. Formerly the head of research at the Philippines Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), she is now the chairwoman of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines where for a long time she has been running the journalists'

safety program. This is a major issue in a country where 32 journalists were massacred in Ampatuan in Maguindanao province in November 2009, a scar on the national psyche which is unlikely to heal. Paraan subsequently led a fact-finding mission to try to establish the circumstances of the massacre. She has constantly pressed the authorities for justice for the victims and their families and an end to impunity. She now faces a charge of contempt as a result of her commitment. More committed than ever to freedom of information, Paraan now runs *Bayan Mo iPatrol Mo*, a citizen journalism outlet that encourages Filipinos to get involved in disclosing instances of corruption and shortcomings of society that they are aware of.

JOHNNY BISSAKONOU**CAR / Africa**

The "ordinary citizen's spokesman" is how Johnny Bissakonou describes himself. Blogger, journalist, radio host, media editor – he has worn many caps during years of trying to provide as much information as possible about Central African Republic. His goal? To expose what's going on and work for a more democratic society. When the rebel Seleka coalition seized power in March 2012, he courageously reported its use of violence against civilians. This put him straight on to the Seleka blacklist and he finally fled the country after repeated threats and his brother's murder by militiamen who were looking for him. From exile, he continues to address the international population on his blog and by radio, hoping to be able to go back when his country is at peace again.

NICAISE KIBEL BEL'OKA**République Démocratique du
DRC / Africa**

Winner of the CNN Africa press freedom prize in 2009, Nicaise Kibel Bel'oka has devoted years of his life to defending media freedom. His work has

been hailed by journalists internationally but has been rewarded with arrests at home. The latest was in September 2012, when a Nord Kivu province customs official in Beni accused him of libel. At the trial, the prosecutor requested a year in prison and 100,000 dollars in damages although Bel'oka produced documents proving what he wrote. But this is a country where libel cases are tried solely on "intent to harm" and ignore the facts of what is reported. As Bel'oka told us: "The Congolese defamation law does not protect the media. It protects the strongest, those who have money and power." The courts continue to turn a deaf ear and Bel'oka's appeal hearing has so far been postponed 19 times.

TSHIVIS TSHIVUADI**DRC / Africa**

The secretary-general of Journalist in Danger, a local NGO, Tshivis Tshivuadi has worked tirelessly for freedom of information in Democratic Republic of Congo for more than 15 years. Instead of deterring him, his first death threats in 2006 just convinced him to keep going. He was threatened again on 1 September 2011 and branded as a government opponent but he coolly continued to defend the Congolese media's right to work freely. When M23 rebels threatened a journalist in October 2012, he loudly denounced this attempt at intimidation, to the point that M23's leaders issued an apology. On 3 May 2013, Journalist in Danger issued a loud appeal to "break the chains of censorship and self-censorship" – a bold message in a country where, despite superficial undertakings, journalists are constantly hounded.

AKSANA PANOVА

Russia / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Aksana Panova has paid a high price for her determination to expose corruption and negligence among powerful local figures in the Yekaterinburg region in the Urals -- she has been banned from doing her job until the end of 2015. The outspokenness of the Ura.ru website that she launched in 2006, and of which she was editor, rapidly gained it popularity. It covered a variety of topics – the poor condition of the roads, the fight against drug abuse, police corruption. But Panova has powerful enemies in the region, which is one of the country's main industrial and oil centres. Ousted from Ura.ru, she set up Znak.com in 2012 and most of her editorial staff joined her there. However, she was hit by a flurry of lawsuits. As soon as one allegation collapsed, another arose. After a year-and-a-half of litigation, she was cleared in two cases and exempted from punishment in a third. However, a businessman brought a well-timed suit claiming damages that he had incurred five years earlier and succeeded in getting her convicted of extortion. She received a fine, a two-year suspended sentence and a ban on practising her profession for the same period.

ISRAPIL SHOVKHALOV

Russia / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Israpil Shovkhalov edits *Dosh*, the only independent magazine that specializes in political, economic and social developments in Chechnya and the rest of the Russian Caucasus. Since its creation in 2003, it has served as a unique information outlet and forum for dialogue in the face of government censorship and ubiquitous violence. But tackling such sensitive subjects as corruption, enforced disappearances and the consequences of Chechnya's two wars entails risk. Shovkhalov and *Dosh* publisher Abdulla

Duduyev were briefly kidnapped in Ingushetia in March 2010. Harassment, threats and smear campaigns have nonetheless not stopped *Dosh* from covering the Caucasus on a shoestring. On the contrary, Shovkhalov and Duduyev keep on developing new projects. In 2013, they and the NGO Sintem together launched a magazine by and for women called *Slovo Zhenshchiny*.

SVETLANA REITER

Russia / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

When Svetlana Reiter received the Politprosvet political journalism award in 2013, she felt she had to remind people that she was interested mainly in social issues. This is the paradox of a country where the political and the social are intertwined more and more closely. It is also characteristic of a form of everyday journalism at ground level, far removed from ideology and power games. Reiter has taken a close interest in the prison system and police violence, she has spoken to autistic children and campaigners promoting alternative policies of fighting drug abuse... She has given a voice to a young Armenian attacked by nationalists and to the police officers who rescued him, suggesting that behind the stories of bloodshed and hate reported in the media, there are others of "decency, hope and friendship". It was her investigations into the political prisoners held after the Bolotnaya Square protests and police violence in Kazan that won her the Politprosvet award. It was other stories that brought her problems. In September 2012, she was summoned by the FSB security service for questioning about an interview about torture in Chechnya, as a witness in an investigation into the chairman of the Committee Against Torture. In March this year, Reiter and most of her colleagues at Lenta.ru, left the previously independent news site after it was abruptly taken under Kremlin control.

AGNÈS UWIMANA NKUSI

Rwanda / Africa

Agnès Uwimana Nkusi is a Rwandan journalist of extraordinary courage. The editor of the privately-owned bimonthly *Umurabyo*, she was first arrested in 2007 and sentenced to two years in prison on charges of inciting civil disobedience, promoting division and genocide denial. After serving her sentence, she went back to work without submitting to the regime or heeding the High Media Council's warnings. Barely a year later, she was back in court again just for doing her job to report the news. Convicted of defamation, this time she got a 17-year jail sentence –extremely harsh but not as extreme as the 33-year sentence sought by the prosecutor. With her health declining fast, the supreme court cut her sentence to four years in April 2012, a falsely generous reduction that falls far short of her release and the quashing of her conviction, which press freedom groups are demanding.

BRANKICA STANKOVIĆ

Serbia / European union & Balkans

It's not easy being an investigative journalist in the Balkans, as the Serbian journalist Brankica Stanković knows only too well. She has headed *Insajder*, the B92 media group's flagship investigative TV programme, since 2004. She was just doing her job in November 2009 when she tackled the sensitive issue of links between organized crime and hooligans that support the Belgrade football club Partizan. That may have been her last moment of complete freedom. Amid death threats and acts of intimidation that included the stabbing of an inflatable doll representing Stanković in the stands of the Partizan stadium, the police put her under protection. She nonetheless still continues to investigate organized crime and corruption.

BLAŽ ZGAGA

Slovenia / European union & Balkans

Ljubljana-based freelance investigative journalist Blaž Zgaga is the author of "In the Name of the State," a bestseller about arms trafficking in the Balkans in 1990s, when it was a regional speciality. In 2000, he exposed the existence of clandestine US intelligence operations in the Balkans and was facing a five-year jail sentence for revealing "military secrets" until finally acquitted. Far from being discouraged, he went on to trigger a political earthquake in Slovenia by revealing that senior Slovenian officials had received kickbacks from a contract with a Finnish arms manufacture. The many public figures hit by the scandal include former Prime Minister Janez Janša, who received a two-year jail sentence in June 2013.

M. V. KAANAMYLNATHAN

Sri Lanka / Asia-Pacific

M. V. Kaanamylnathan had 50 years' tough experience in journalism and had worked for every Tamil-language newspaper in Sri Lanka when he took the helm of the main Tamil daily *Uthayan* in 1985, two years after the civil war flared up. Dozens of members of the paper's staff were among the conflict's 100,000 dead. Bombings, shootings, grenade attacks and murders were used to try to silence a voice that tried to keep to a middle course between the central government and the Tamil rebels. Five years after the official end of the conflict, Kaanamylnathan, who himself escaped an attack in 2001, and his newspaper are still making waves. Last year, a series of articles on land seizures by the Sri Lankan army was followed by a brutal attack on the paper's offices by six masked men.

RAZAN ZAITOUNEH

Syria / MENA

A writer and human rights lawyer who founded the Violations Documentation Centre in Syria (VDC) in 2011, Razan Zaitouneh was kidnapped on 9 December 2013 along with her husband and two VDC colleagues in the Damascus suburb where they were hiding from government forces. It is not known for sure who kidnapped them, but some sources said they were members of the Salafi group Jaysh Al-Islam. Awarded many prizes including the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2011 and the International Women of Courage Award in 2013, Zaitouneh knew she was under threat from all sides. In a video message recorded five days before her disappearance, she said: "I salute the thousands of men and women who work silently at the grass roots to achieve their dream of freedom and justice."

NURIDDIN KARCHIBOEV

Tajikistan / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Nuriddin Karshiboev has written more than 600 articles and reports in a 30-year career. He likes to say he fell into journalism at a very young age. While still at school he wrote articles in newspapers for children. However, grander ambitions have brought him fame these days. He heads the Tajik National Association of Independent Media (NANSIT), which he co-founded in 1999. He works tirelessly to defend colleagues who are under pressure, to promote the highest ethical and democratic standards and to fight for changes in Tajik law to improve freedom of information. In a country traumatized by civil war and having to face the authoritarian tendencies of an unshakable government, NAMSIT has been the sword and shield of independent journalism and an incubator for a democratic and pluralistic media culture. The association records violations of press freedom,

organizes roundtables and training sessions, and manages three legal support centres across the country.

CHIRANUCH

PREMCHAIPORN

Thailand / Asia-Pacific

Chiranuch Premchaiporn, better known by the pen name Jiew, is the editor of the online newspaper *Prachatai*. She was briefly arrested and prosecuted in 2010 for lèse majesté. Under the terms of the draconian Computer Crimes Act, she could face up to 50 years in prison. The evidence was scant: she was accused of failing to remove anti-monarchist comments from the site quickly enough in 2008. She was subjected to judicial harassment for more than three years, during which time she did all she could to counter censorship of her site, before being given a suspended sentence of eight months' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 baht (\$635) in 2012. Determined to assert her rights and win her case, she appealed against the court's decision. But the legal system refused to budge. Premchaiporn's battle for freedom of the press is indicative of the harshness of Thai justice system and the punitive nature of some of its laws which, instead of protecting the monarchy, are used as political weapons against critical and independent voices.

JOSÉ BELO**Timor Leste / Asia-Pacific**

During the Indonesian occupation of Timor Leste in the 1990s, José Belo learned to cope with anything. He was handcuffed, hung by his feet, burned and put in prison for three years. Finally in 2008, the country's legal system, which had been independent for only a short time, threatened him with seven years' imprisonment for accusing the minister of justice of corruption. Today the founder of the uncompromising weekly *Tempo Semanal* and president of the Timor-Leste Press Union is waging a new battle -- against a new media law being cooked up by the Dili government and parliament. He believes the legislation will give too much power to a proposed Press Council to be appointed by the government. He says he is prepared to go to prison again to prevent its passage into law.

KALAFI MOALA**Tonga / Asia-Pacific**

"If you're going to influence any society, or any group of people, information is the key. [...] The victory for freedom of the press and freedom of expression is a victory for the people." That is the motto of Kalafi Moala, publisher and managing director of Taimi Media Network based in the archipelago's capital, Nuku'alofa. In 1989, at a time when all news outlets were in the hands of an authoritarian government or the church. Moala launched Taimi O Tonga, Tonga's first independent weekly and one of the most controversial newspapers in the whole Pacific region. In 1996, Moala and his colleagues were sentenced to 30 days' imprisonment each for publishing pro-democracy reports that were judged to be seditious. Using prison visitors, the tenacious journalist managed to smuggle out editorials written on toilet tissue which were published in the course of the following four weeks. Banned from publishing in 2003 and again in 2004, Kalafi hung on and in 2009 he acquired the state-owned

Tonga Chronicle, Tonga's first newspaper. Two years later, he launched a website www.taimionline.com which streams the media group's radio stations. Through his news outlets and groups such as the Pacific Islands Media Association, Moala continues to fight for press freedom and to inspire young journalists in the region.

FAHEM BOUKADOUS**Tunisia / MENA**

Fahem Boukadous has suffered a lot for the right to information, including torture, imprisonment, several hunger strikes and living in hiding. A human rights activist during the Ben Ali era, when no freedom of opinion was tolerated, Boukadous was one of the few journalists to cover the 2008 uprising in the Gafsa mining district. After being tried and convicted in 2010, he had expected to spend the next four years in prison. But thanks to the revolution of 14 January 2011, Boukadous was released and was able to resume the struggle. Later the same year, he and other activists founded the Tunis Centre for Media Freedom (CTLP) with the aim of monitoring violations of Tunisian journalists' rights, participating in the overhaul of the media sector and giving training in media ethics.

NAJIBA HAMROUNI**Tunisia / MENA**

Najiba Hamrouni, acknowledged by her peers as a model of integrity, has spared no effort in defending the freedom of the press. Originally an ordinary member of the Association of Tunisian Journalists, she became the treasurer of the National Union of Tunisian Journalists, in 2008 and was elected its president in 2011. Her courage and her will have enabled her to defend Tunisia's journalists and their working conditions, while stressing on the need for the national media to break with how journalism was practiced under the former government. In late 2013 she was awarded the

Akademia Prize for Freedom of the Press.

HASAN CEMAL**Turkey / Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

"If this is journalism, then down with your journalism!" Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan did not mince his words when he accused the daily *Milliyet* of jeopardising the peace process with Kurdish rebels in March last year when it published the minutes of the negotiations. His blast was aimed partly at the noted columnist Hasan Cemal, who defended his newspaper and said he believed each must do his job. He was forced to resign shortly afterwards. Yet, if anyone believes in peace and reconciliation, it is him. But he is also used to breaking taboos. At the height of the fighting between Ankara and the PKK, he was among the handful of journalists who went to interview the rebels in their stronghold in the Kandil mountains. In 2012, he published a book whose title alone would have landed him in prison a few years earlier: "1915: Armenian Genocide". It quickly became a best seller and its success was a sign that Turkish society was changing. The 70-year-old journalist, who now works for the news website *T24*, is still the regular target of hate campaigns and smears by the far right.

OLEKSIY MATSUKA
Ukraine / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Oleksiy Matsuka's car was torched outside his home in the eastern city of Donetsk on 12 April. Then his photo with the words "Attention, traitor!" was circulated amid mounting tension a few days later. This is not the first time the 31-year-old journalist has been threatened. The news site he has been running for the past 10 years, *Novosti Donbasa*, covers regional corruption, power struggles and abuse of authority. Since the summer of 2013, he has been using his *Donetskaya Pravda* project to go further, investigating local government spending, public bidding and conflicts of public and private interest. Shortly after the project was launched, he and his colleagues began being the targets of close surveillance, threats and strange warnings – incidents not unlike what he experienced him 2011, when his apartment was set on fire by someone who blocked his exit and left a wreath at the door. Fortunately, he was not at home.

SERHIY LECHTCHENKO
Ukraine / Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The day after President Viktor Yanukovych fled, on 22 February 2014, the world was amazed by the luxury of his Mezhyhirya Residence. But Serhiy Leshchenko was anything but surprised. Chandeliers, marble, private zoo, car collection and airstrip on the bank of the Dnieper, he had already described all of that in detail and had drawn attention to the gulf between this wealth and the president's official income. He had even investigated the origin of this money in depth. Leshchenko joined the independent news website *Ukrainskaya Pravda* in 2000, a few days before its founder, Georgi Gongadze was murdered. He is now its deputy editor. Like his colleague Mustafa Nayyem, he quickly became

one of Ukraine's experts on the corrupt practices of its political and business elite. A critic of the Orange Revolution's broken promises, he was also one of the most lucid observers of the Yanukovych regime's oligarchic and authoritarian excesses. His reporting is part and parcel of his civic activism. He helped launch the "Stop Censorship!" press freedom campaign and the "Chesno" campaign for transparency and financial responsibility. His blog is one of the country's most popular.

GLENN GREENWALD
USA / The Americas

Glenn Greenwald is a former lawyer, journalist and star blogger of the US edition of the *Guardian* newspaper. He will always be remembered as the journalist behind the revelations by Edward Snowden. He first met the man who a few days later became the most famous whistleblower in history in a tiny Hong Kong hotel room in May 2012. Snowden handed over to the American journalist tens of thousands of classified documents that showed the extent of the surveillance practices of the British and US intelligence services. Working alone from Rio de Janeiro, Greenwald shook the world's most powerful nation and its British allies to their foundations. US President Barack Obama and Britain's prime minister, David Cameron, were publicly confronted with evidence of the abuses carried out by their intelligence services. They were faced with a diplomatic firestorm and an outcry from activists and campaigners for a free Internet. It was largely thanks to Greenwald's work that the *Guardian* US was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for "its revelation of widespread secret surveillance by the National Security Agency" and for sparking "a debate about the relationship between the government and the public over issues of security and privacy".

LAURA POITRAS
USA / The Americas

Without Laura Poitras, the meeting between Edward Snowden and Glenn Greenwald might never have taken place. When the whistleblower contacted Greenwald in 2011, the latter was reluctant to use secure encrypted communications. Snowden turned to Poitras, who was familiar with such techniques. It's easy to see why. The US authorities had had their sights on the film-maker ever since she made the Oscar-nominated documentary "My Country, My Country" about the war in Iraq in 2006. Whenever she travels, her air ticket is marked SSSS, which stands for "Secondary Security Screening Selection". This means she is on a watch list and is subjected to extensive questioning when she returns from abroad. She has been questioned more than 40 times and her computer equipment is regularly seized and inspected. She has never been given a reason for this harassment. Poitras now lives in Berlin where she continues her work with Greenwald on the surveillance practices of the NSA. She has received numerous honours and awards for her documentary work.

LE NGOC THANH
Vietnam / Asia-Pacific

Anton le Ngoc Thanh is a journalist and a Catholic priest. His work for Vietnam Redemperist News, a Catholic news organization for which he has worked since the 1990s, has caused him numerous problems with the Vietnamese authorities. In 2012 he was stopped for questioning on his way to Bac Lieu in the south of the country, where a woman had set fire to herself in protest against her daughter, the blogger Ta Phong Tan, being put on trial. He was held for several hours for causing a traffic accident while travelling on foot. He was arrested again last year during a demonstration in support of the blogger and activist Dinh Nhat Uy, convicted for organizing a campaign for the release of his jailed younger brother. Thanh is under constant police surveillance and is frequently prevented from covering and publicizing the human rights abuses that he has witnessed.

PHAM CHI DUNG
Vietnam / Asia-Pacific

Like others who have seen nomenklatura corruption up close, Pham Chi Dung returned his party card. Instead he devoted himself to writing and developing a critique of Vietnam's political class, which he knows inside out. He was a military officer for many years and was an aide to Truong Tan Sang in Ho Chin Minh City before Sang became president in 2011. He has written about public security and the dominant cultural, economic and religious ideology. He was arrested on charges of "conspiring to overthrow the government" and "anti-government propaganda" in July 2012 in connection with articles about corruption and the government's shortcomings, but the investigation was abandoned and he was released seven months later. His PhD in economics, his 11 books and his many interviews for the *BBC*, *RFI* and *Radio Free Asia* still do

not protect him. His passport was confiscated as he was about to board a flight to Geneva in February 2014 to attend a conference on rights and freedoms in Vietnam.

Foundation in 2013.

TRUONG DUY NHAT
Vietnam / Asia-Pacific

After starting out as a reporter for regional police publications, Truong Duy Nhat worked for the daily *Dai Doan Ket* (Great Solidarity). But he resigned as a state media journalist in 2010 to become a prolific and outspoken blogger, calling his blog – originally truongduynhat.vn and then, a year later, truongduynhat.org – "Another point of view." He posted more than 1,000 articles, most of them his own, in the space of three years. After four orders to close his blogs, he was finally arrested in May 2013 and sentenced to two years in prison in connection with 12 of his most vitriolic articles. Seven months before his arrest, he wrote: "I am neither a criminal nor a reactionary. The handcuff and gun should not be used against bloggers who sacrifice their interests to keep outspoken blogs that are helping to change the party and the people."

ABDUL BARY TAHER
Yemen / MENA

Abdul Bary Taher is leading figure in the fight for press freedom in Yemen. He began his career as a journalist in 1973, writing for the daily *Al-Thawra* (Revolution). He served as its editor in chief between 1990 and 1992 but has paid a high price for the independence and outspokenness of his editorials. He has been subjected to harassment by the authorities, having been taken in for questioning five times and ending up in prison. Taher is a founding member of the Yemeni Journalists Union and was its president from 1976 to 1998. A staunch defender of freedom of the press, he received the first press freedom prize awarded by the Yemeni NGO the Freedom