

## Attacks on press freedom multiply - WAN-IFRA

At least 88 journalists have been killed so far this year and hundreds of media employees have been arrested and jailed, most often following sham trials or without formal charges being brought against them. This is according to the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) half-year review of press freedom worldwide.



More than 750 journalists have been murdered worldwide in the past decade, said the report, presented to the board of WAN-IFRA, meeting in Hyderabad, India, on the eve of the World Newspaper Congress, World Editors Forum and Info Services Expo 2009, the global summit meetings of the world's press, 1 - 3 December 2009.

The attack in the Philippines on 23 November 2009, in which more than 30 journalists were among the 57 murdered, brought the total of journalists killed in the Philippines to 35 this year, making it the most dangerous country in the world for journalists.

### According to the report:

- Hundreds of media employees have been arrested for their work in the past year, and at least 170 remain in jail today.
- The hostility of many governments to any form of dissent continues to impede independent news reporting in Asia. Journalists reporting on corruption find themselves in the firing line of those directly indirectly exposed by their reports. Continued imprisonment of journalists in China, Burma's mass censorship and repression of independent media, the consequences of decades long civil war in Sri Lanka, and the violence against the press in Nepal are only some of the key challenges facing press freedom in the region.
- Governments throughout the Middle East and North Africa continue to demonstrate their intolerance for truth, dissent and satire. Journalists and freedom of expression advocates are continuously targeted by the authorities, while the severe crackdown on blogging region-wide reveals how much governments believe that the Internet can be a threat to their power.
- Across Africa, Heads of State and their friends continue to abuse criminal defamation and sedition laws to punish journalists who expose policy failures and corruption, and who report on conflicts and opposition views.  
Crackdowns on the independent press and the use of force are intensifying, inducing both self- and government-imposed censorship.
- In Latin America, governments and criminals ruthlessly attack journalists investigating high-level

corruption and organised crime. Reporters are murdered with impunity, while critical and opposition media are shut down arbitrarily.

- Prosecution and violence continues to be aimed at journalists in various parts of Europe and Central Asia, as they question government policies, use information deemed classified or unveil human rights abuses. Police raids, abductions and imprisonments remain common.

The report, with region-by-region details, is available on the WAN-IFRA website at <http://www.wan-press.org/article18317.html>

Details of the cases of journalists murdered in 2009 can be found at <http://www.wan-press.org/pfreedom/jkilled.php?id=3996>

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