

## Sierra Leone project enters second phase

By Jaime Jacques

The Sierra Leone media rebuilding project has come a long way since project manager Dale Ratcliffe and director of development Nick Fillmore sat in a sweltering Freetown airport in March 2001, with a few dozen pens and some posters.

Since the 18-month project – intended to address publishing, editing and reporting problems – wound up last May, reporting in Sierra Leone newspapers has improved significantly, and plans are under way for the next phase.

The first phase aimed to replace sensationalism with stories based on truth. The sensationalism may have started to wane, but the truth remains: years of civil war and economic decline have left Sierra Leone with a strange mixture of non-government organizations (NGOs), child soldiers, amputees and hordes of UN workers and British soldiers.

When CJFE first arrived, the state of the media in Freetown  
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“We won’t be silenced.” Colombian soldiers on both sides of the street watch journalists and supporters protest the murder of Orlando Sierra, a newspaper editor known for investigating rampant corruption. See page 7.

CREDIT WITHHELD BY REQUEST

## IFEX marks first 10 years of free-expression networking

By Nick Fillmore

Electronic bonds forged between the fourth-floor office of a modest building in downtown Toronto and the far reaches of the globe have been helping protect the lives of journalists and defend independent media for the past 10 years.

The International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) – familiar in press-freedom and human-rights circles around the world, but relatively unknown at home – celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Managed by CJFE on behalf of 57 other free-expression member groups from

around the world, IFEX is one of the world’s leading human-rights campaign networks.

The IFEX Clearing House helps co-ordinate international press-freedom activities, circulates a weekly free-expression webzine (the *IFEX Communiqué*), organizes an annual conference and workshops, provides start-up support for press-freedom NGOs in developing countries, and operates a very effective urgent appeal Action Alert Network.

In a typical Alerts case, IFEX members lobbied and appealed on behalf of imprisoned Cameroon journalist and newspaper publisher Pius Njawe. When he was

finally released, Njawe wrote to IFEX and its member groups:

“At last I am free. Free after being arbitrarily detained for 10 months, just for trying to do my job. Free after 10 months in horrible conditions. If I was able to survive from hell, it was thanks to the constant backing and signs of solidarity from the members of your organisation.”

IFEX was born in the fall of 1992 during meetings at the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal. CJFE’s predecessor – the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists – organized the Montreal meeting

with financial backing from the Ford Foundation and moral support from the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. More than a dozen free expression groups were active around the world at the time, but they knew little about one another’s activities. Consequently, some of their work overlapped, and many were issuing unco-ordinated and even conflicting reports.

Creation of the new network depended heavily on the Internet as a means of communication and human-rights campaigning. The then-revolutionary technology made possible the mass-distribu-

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sing the post-colonial blues

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# Persevering Tajik first Journalist-at-Risk Fellow

By Joel Ruimy

**H**IS NAME is Konstantin Parshin, but he invites you to call him Kostya.

The first Donner/CJFE Journalist-at-Risk Fellow began his studies at Toronto's Massey College in early September for an academic year, planning to return to Tajikistan once the fellowship ends next spring.

"I'm very excited about the time I will spend in Canada and I'm grateful to everyone concerned for this great honour," he



Konstantin Parshin in Toronto.

said shortly after learning he had won the fellowship in a field of 40 journalists from around the world.

Kostya wants to enter the political-science stream at Massey to better understand newly emerging states, how they enact legislation, and the conflicts between that legislation and journalists' work.

Parshin, 36, has had a long and successful career as a journalist in Tajikistan, working under difficult circumstances. In the late 1980s, he wrote for a daily newspaper in the capital of Dushanbe. But shortly afterwards, a devastating civil war led to the shutdown of all dailies. So he helped launch radio station NIC; its licence was revoked by the government earlier this year without explanation.

He has written extensively about Tajikistan for such online publications as Eurasianet.com, and Czechoslovakia-based Transitions On Line (TOL.CZ). He has also produced field reports from Dushanbe for the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute of the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced Inter-

national Studies at Johns Hopkins University and studied journalism at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

"Tajikistan geographically stands apart from the Western world and has very few outside visitors," Kostya wrote in his application for the Fellowship. "Access to the global electronic net is limited; the choice of literature and publications covering contemporary ethnic and political issues is extremely poor.

"Tajikistan needs integration with the rest of the world. I wish to become a participant [in] this process."

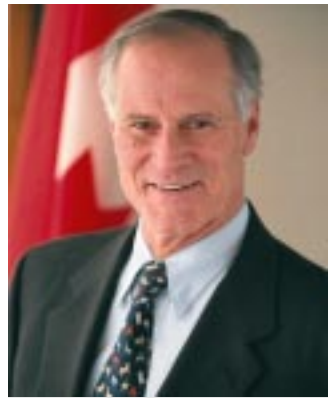
Tajikistan, one of 15 former Soviet republics, became independent in 1991, the same year that all daily newspapers were forced to close. The civil war of 1992-97 left between 20,000 and 50,000 Tajiks dead and forced as many as 800,000 more to flee their homes, according to Human Rights Watch.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists has documented the murders of 19 journalists in Tajikistan since 1992 and said in a report in May that "government harassment, intimidation, and censorship regularly stifle press freedom in Tajikistan."

Kostya is one of seven participants in the journalism fellowship program of Massey College in the University of Toronto. The Donner/CJFE Journalist-at-Risk Fellowship is awarded to a mid-career journalist affected by sectarian or ideological violence and intolerance.

As its name suggests, the Donner/CJFE Fellowship came about with a special one-time grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation and the active participation of Massey College, an interdisciplinary graduate residential college that opened in 1963. Home to the Journalism Fellowship Program since its opening, the college provides a congenial intellectual environment to exchange opinions and ideas.

The Donner Canadian Foundation has agreed to extend its support for the Fellowship for at least one more year.



Bill Graham to speak.

## Foreign Minister headlines dinner

Circle Wednesday November 13 on your calendars for CJFE's fifth annual International Press Freedom Awards dinner, at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto.

Keynote speaker will be Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham. Co-chairs of the event are journalist Ann Medina and Torstar CEO Rob Prichard. In his 50th year in journalism and 25th as anchor of CTV News, Lloyd Robertson will host the gala.

CJFE members can buy tickets at a special discount rate of \$85 (non-member cost is \$325). Call CJFE at 416-515-9622 or e-mail [cjfe@cjfe.org](mailto:cjfe@cjfe.org). (We accept VISA, MasterCard, Amex or cheques.)

Journalists, media executives and corporate leaders from around the country attend the dinner to recognize and celebrate colleagues who risk legal, political, and physical dangers for the sake of their profession.

Funds raised from the evening support such projects as CJFE's Journalist in Distress Fund, which provides medical, travel and legal support to international journalists in need. For more information, please contact CJFE.



Lloyd Robertson to host.

## Students launch CJFE's first university chapter

By Eric Morgan

A new era is about to dawn for Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. In September it was joined by CJFE@UofT, a group of 120 University of Toronto students dedicated to raising awareness of free-expression issues.

Hot spots of free expression are not always as far-flung as Sierra Leone and Colombia. Regardless of locale, the right to speak the truth cannot be taken for granted – its continued survival requires vigilant protection. Knowledge and action are key.

CJFE@UofT will monitor free expression on campus and make students aware of free-expression issues elsewhere in the world. The group is planning several speaking events to hear about professional journalists' experiences of communicating the truth.

The group also plans to participate in CJFE letter-writing campaigns, giving students a voice in advocating for free expression.

In addition, CJFE@UofT was involved in the Donner/CJFE Journalist at Risk Fellowship at Massey College, welcoming Konstantin Parshin of Tajikistan to his one-year post in September.

In the near future, the campus organization plans to revive the CJFE Student Press Freedom Award (last given in 1998) to recognize student journalists who have stood up courageously for free expression.

CJFE hopes the founding of CJFE@UofT signals the beginning of a youth wing, with future branches sprouting up on campuses across Canada.

To find out more about CJFE@UofT, contact Eric Morgan: [eric\\_today@hotmail.com](mailto:eric_today@hotmail.com).

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Canadian Journalists for Free Expression is a Canadian non-governmental organization supported by Canadian journalists and advocates of free expression. The purpose of the organization is to defend the rights of journalists and contribute to the development of media freedom throughout the world. CJFE recognizes these rights are not confined to journalists and strongly supports and defends the broader objective of freedom of expression in Canada and around the world.

CJFE membership costs \$25 per calendar year. For any donation beyond that amount, a charitable tax receipt will be issued.

CJFE administers a Clearing House for the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX), which operates an Action Alert Network and globally disseminates information to organizations and individuals.





Delegates from 46 countries discussed insult laws, journalists' safety, media ethics and the impact of September 11, 2001, for free expression around the world.

PHOTOS BY NICK FILLMORE / CJFE



## IFEX meeting welcomes 3 new members

By Joel Ruimy

It's a small country with a big heart – and big heat. Senegal was the site of the 10th general meeting of IFEX, a gathering of some 80 freedom-of-expression activists from around the world, from September 8-13.

Working in temperatures of 30 Celsius, with relative humidity near 100% and the hotel air conditioning working only sporadically, delegates literally sweated the details about the big issues facing defenders of press freedom and free expression.

CJFE runs the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) Clearing House on behalf of nearly 60 member groups from around the world. The Clearing House collects and disseminates Action Alerts, and it co-ordinates joint campaigns on behalf of members.

A highlight of the meeting was a passionate discussion of "insult laws" in many African countries. A legacy of French colonialism, these laws allow prosecution of journalists who "insult" government officials in the media. Insult can be loosely defined – journalists in Zambia were prosecuted for writing that the president suffers from Parkinson's disease – and penalties can be stiff. The discussion ended with delegates laying the groundwork for what they hope will be a worldwide campaign to eliminate all insult laws in Africa.

Another common theme was the growing sophistication of many repressive regimes. Where once they might have dispatched thugs to physically attack journalists, they now use more subtle methods. Advertisers are pressured to boycott opposition newspapers, import duties on newsprint suddenly skyrocket, or friends of the government receive generous cash aid to launch pro-regime newspapers.

Delegates agreed the freedom-of-expression movement will, itself, have to become more sophisticated to deal with these issues.

The meeting opened with IFEX Alerts co-ordinators Marianna Tzabiras and Michaël Elbaz leading a workshop for smaller groups on how to fashion good Action Alerts – the communications lifeblood of IFEX. Alerts notify the

free-expression community and its friends of attacks on journalists and media institutions. Going out electronically to thousands of subscribers, the Alerts focus atten-

- **Norwegian PEN**, an Oslo-based affiliate of International PEN, the writers defence organization. Norwegian PEN is also successor to the Norwegian Forum for Free Expression, a one-time IFEX member that ceased operations earlier this year.

- **Cartoonist Rights Network**, the U.S.-based group that is "the world's only human-rights and free-speech organization dedicated exclusively to the well-being and safety of editorial and humour cartoonists all over the world."

- **Periodistas Frente a la Corrupción** (Journalists Against Corruption), the El Salvador-based group that monitors journalists and media in Latin America that are threatened or targeted for exposing corruption.

Conference delegates agreed to postpone the next general meeting, slated for the Azerbaijan capital of Baku, to 2004. The move allows the Clearing House to proceed with an operational reorganization in the coming year.



The International Freedom of Expression eXchange marks its 10th anniversary in Dakar, Senegal.

tion on repressive regimes. Many colleagues have told us that their governments, barraged with international attention sparked by our Alerts, eased the pressure on them. Producing good Alerts isn't difficult, but requires hard work

and a certain savvy.

The meeting also accepted three new members, bringing total IFEX membership to 57. The newcomers are:



en français

en español

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tion e-mail message, which IFEX could send to more than 1,600 human-rights groups at the push of one key, replacing letter-writing and fax campaigning.

IFEX launched one of the first e-mail human-rights newsletters, still published today. In 1995, when the network was heavily dominated by Northern-based groups, CJFE spearheaded a campaign in IFEX to establish the Developing Countries Outreach Program, which has assisted more than 40 Southern free-expression NGOs with training in human-rights work, computer and Internet hookups, membership in the IFEX network, and assistance in fundraising skills to make them more self-sustaining.

CJFE now raises more than

\$800,000 a year from donor agencies around the world to run the Clearing House. There are seven full-time and two part-time employees. Three staff members – two in Toronto and one in Montreal – edit and process more than 2,000 free-expression/press-freedom reports each year. The system reaches more than 1,600 human-rights groups and media in

over 130 countries.

CJFE and the rest of the IFEX community celebrated the 10th anniversary at the IFEX conference in Dakar, Senegal, in September. More than 80 delegates and observers attended the meetings and accompanying training sessions to help set the agenda for free-expression activities for the coming year.

### How IFEX can keep you informed on press freedom around the globe

You can receive key IFEX information free of charge, delivered to your e-mail address. E-mail us at [communique@ifex.org](mailto:communique@ifex.org) and ask about:

- receiving the weekly *IFEX Communiqué* by e-mail
- receiving Action Alert reports concerning countries of your choice

To research any aspect of free expression, look at our country reports, or to read *the IFEX Communiqué*, visit our website at: [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)



When Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov visited Paris in July, Reporters sans frontières protested against the state of media freedom. “For Russian journalists the system hasn’t changed,” posters read.

CP PICTURE ARCHIVE (FRANÇOIS MORI/AP)

## Press freedom in Russia

### a short-lived memory?

By Kokila Jacob

Old habits die hard. The freedom of expression that Russian media gained in the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of state monopoly on media ownership now seems a mirage.

The end of the '90s saw signs of increasing censorship and state harassment.

In its 2002 annual report, Reporters sans frontières (RSF) decried the “intolerable” state of press freedom in Russia while calling on President Vladimir Putin to take steps to correct the situation. “The government keeps giving assurances about media freedom,” RSF secretary-general Robert Ménard said in a letter to Putin, “but more and more journalists are being attacked and killed and the legal harassment of some media is forcing the entire press to censor itself.”

Alexei Simonov, president of the Glasnost Defence Foundation, which promotes press freedom in Russia, has warned that Russian authorities were “continuing their purge of the media ... to remind all journalists to think very carefully before they wrote or said anything.”

#### Recent RSF alerts indicate why:

- Grigory Pasko, a journalist for the Russian Navy’s daily, *Boevaya Vakhta*, was arrested in

November 1997 and detained for nearly 20 months for having “gathered state secrets for the purpose of transmitting them to foreign organizations.” In July 1999 he was sentenced to a three-year prison term by the Vladivostok Military Court for “abuse of his authority,” then pardoned and re-sentenced in December 2001 to a four-year prison term for “high treason.”

The journalist had filmed scenes of liquid radioactive waste being dumped in the Sea of Japan. These images, broadcast over the NHK Japanese television channel, raised a loud public outcry in Japan. He had also written articles on the pollution caused by abandoned Russian nuclear submarines and the alleged involvement of the FSB in trafficking nuclear wastes.

- On March 30 Igor Zotov, editor-in-chief of the daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, owned by businessman Boris Berezovsky, was investigated for allegedly libelling a Moscow judge.

Zotov’s colleagues say the move amounts to legal harassment similar to last year’s campaign against Yevgeny Kiselev, head of TV6 television. The station had been the centrepiece of Berezovsky’s media empire before its broadcasting licence was reassigned to a group of journalists who had allied themselves with pro-government figures.

- In February, the newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* was ordered to pay 30 million rubles in libel damages after an article accused a local official of corruption.

#### Last year’s upsurge in physical attacks on journalists continues.

- On March 31, Valery Batuyev, a reporter with the weekly *Moskovsky Novosti* who specialises in Chechnya, was murdered at his home in Moscow.

- Natalia Skryl, an economic reporter for the newspaper *Nashe Vremia*, in Rostov-on-Don (south-western Russia), was killed March 8 near her home in Taganrog. Vera Yuzhanskaya, the paper’s editor, connected the murder to her investigations into large firms in the region.

- On March 11, assailants tried to kill Sergei Solovkin, a correspondent for the Sochi fort-

nightly *Novaya Gazeta*, and his wife. He had recently written articles on corruption in the Krasnodar region.

While all this indicates that Russian media are now less free than four or five years ago, and the mood among journalists is gloomy, not everyone places the blame entirely on the government. Laura Belin, a Russian affairs specialist at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, says the gains of the post-Soviet period have not been reversed: the state monopoly on media ownership has not been restored, and government officials rarely impose political censorship.

The 1990s saw a proliferation of private media – print, radio and TV networks – with the Russian economy ill-equipped to support them. Since so many were not profitable, they were forced to rely on outside funding. This “new financial dependence on industrial or banking groups has led to a noticeable erosion of media autonomy,” says Belin.



ONE



# Uzbekistan loosens censorship but Central Asia remains closed

By John McLeod

When Uzbekistan's official censor, Erkin Komilov, reported to work on May 13, he discovered he no longer had a job. This in a country that had increased media censorship after it achieved independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991.

The authoritarian government of Islam Karimov is notorious for restricting press freedom and torturing political opponents, according to human-rights organizations. In **UZBEKISTAN**, freedom of assembly is prohibited, independent news outlets don't exist, and journalists critical of the government are routinely threatened by state authorities.

But while in North America the fallout from September 11 has been increased self-censorship, in Uzbekistan it has ironically led to a slight loosening of censorship. The Uzbek government's May decision to lift state censorship – for the first time since 1991 – was one of several Karimov initiatives in the last year, much to the surprise of human-rights organizations.

How could this happen?

Since September 11, the United States has courted Uzbekistan as a bridgehead in its war in neighbouring Afghanistan. In return for increased financial aid, Uzbekistan allowed the U.S. to use the Khanabad military airport and granted it road and rail access to Afghanistan via Termez. But the U.S. has also required Karimov to improve human rights.

The September 11 effect included lifting state censorship, the first official registration of a local independent human-rights organization, and the trial and conviction of three security service agents for torturing and killing a suspected member of a banned Islamic group.

As a result, newspapers no longer have the onerous task of vetting all their copy, making arbitrary changes or having articles removed at the last minute. The change was made without fanfare, but the ripple effect is still being felt months later.

Despite these glimmers of hope, international organizations are still critical of Karimov's regime. On May 8, the U.N. Committee against Torture expressed concern about the "numerous, ongoing and consistent allegations of particularly brutal acts of torture by law enforcement personnel." The World Press Freedom Committee and Russia's Glasnost Defence Foundation say Uzbekistan's press "remains under absolute government control," while the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) says a culture of self-censorship pervades the country as a result of harsh government policies.

Last June, a CPJ fact-finding mission concluded that local journalists generally avoided reporting human-rights violations, official corruption or opposition parties and Islamic groups. CPJ says authorities also threaten journalists with imprisonment and use

The government continues to control all Internet providers through its own provider, Uzpak, and prevents access to many critical sites.

## No better nearby

If Uzbekistan's moves to improve free-expression seem surprising, conditions in most of its Central Asian neighbours are still alarming.

**KYRGYZSTAN** – Though Kyrgyzstan is traditionally the most open of the Central Asian countries, press freedom here suffered major setbacks in the last year as President Askar Akayev's government appeared to be falling apart in the face of a deteriorating economy and a vocal and growing opposition. Politically motivated civil libel suits resulted in exorbitant damage awards, driving some newspapers to the brink of bankruptcy.



CENTRAL ASIA NEWS.NET

tactics such as harassment, lawsuits, politically motivated tax probes and arbitrary media regulations.

Independent Uzbek journalists and human-rights activists told CPJ they are concerned that the U.S.-Uzbekistan rapprochement may lead the American government to soften its criticism of Karimov's repressive regime, rendering the official loosening of censorship meaningless. Although there is now room for mild criticism and public mention of previously forbidden topics such as unemployment, unofficial harassment of outspoken critics has continued.

**KAZAKHSTAN** – Despite a lack of official censorship, Kazakh media suffers much greater self-censorship than Kyrgyzstan's. They face tighter laws on foreign content and amendments to the Mass Media Law that widen state media control by including websites. This has mainly affected independent journalists and politicians, who often publish on the Internet.

The state controls all of Kazakhstan's printing houses, as well as the country's two main Internet service providers. Officials often block access to politically sensitive material, including the web site of the Information Analytical Center Eurasia

(www.eurasia.org.ru), based in Moscow and funded by exiled members of Kazakhstan's opposition party, the Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan.

Most of Kazakhstan's newspapers and television stations are owned, directly or indirectly, by the president's family or business associates.

**TURKMENISTAN** – Though a crucial U.S. ally since September 11, Turkmenistan shows no signs of allowing any press or cultural freedom. Last year, "president-for-life" Niyazov banned opera and ballet as "alien" to Turkmen culture.

The state controls all publishing and broadcast licences, and Internet access is only available through the state provider, Turkmentelecom. The regime routinely persecutes political and religious dissidents.

Journalists often face reprisals if they travel abroad. The Council for the Supervision of Foreigners also controls outside influences by strictly monitoring the activities of all international visitors.

**TAJIKISTAN** – The first private radio channel in the capital, Dushanbe, has recently been approved, and a private broadcaster has begun providing cable television service for wealthier TV watchers in the city – the first time that Tajiks can watch uncensored foreign broadcasts.

But government officials still intimidate and attack journalists with impunity, while the printing industry remains under strict state control, allowing little or no room for independent papers to be published freely, says CPJ.

Since 1992, eight journalists have been physically attacked or intimidated for reporting on the military, organized crime, drug trafficking, official corruption, opposition parties, and criticism of politicians and government officials, CPJ says. In the same period, 19 journalists were killed.

John McLeod is a freelance journalist based in Uzbekistan.

DECADE AFTER Soviet Union's collapse,  
glasnost in media NOWHERE IN SIGHT



**A Sierra Leonean operates a press donated by CJFE that is improving the printing of several newspapers.**

## CJFE project upgrading Sierra Leone newspapers

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was much like that of the country: confused, and in need of guidance – both financially and ethically. During the first phase, CJFE successfully guided five partner newspapers toward more accurate and consistent reporting, but that was only the first part of a long and difficult challenge. Sierra Leone's media still need CJFE's continued support. CJFE submitted a project proposal to the CIDA peace-building fund in August, and after receiving the funds requested, the project is due to begin in November.

Whereas the first media rebuilding effort focused primarily on improving content in newspapers, the project's new stage will focus more on practicalities such

as building circulation, advertising and printing. After training journalists and editors to report accurately and fairly, the most pressing issue facing the newspapers now is getting the papers out to as many Sierra Leoneans as possible. Fillmore says it is important to show that sensationalism no longer drives the newspaper industry, and that regaining reader interest and trust begins with increased circulation.

Roger Holmes, publisher of the *Wainwright Star Chronicle* in Alberta, spent two weeks in Freetown in June 2001 training journalists in the basics of editing, writing, layout, design, photography and business.

"Currently the only method of distributing newspapers is

through street vendors," Holmes recalled in November 2001.

"Paper boys meet early each morning with the newspaper producers on a street corner in downtown Freetown. The boys check the front pages of the newspapers, and only purchase copies for re-sale that they think will sell on the street, which means the public does not have wide access to newspapers."

CJFE will work with the Sierra Leone Guild of Newspaper Editors and the powerful street vendors group to get the papers into new areas of Freetown. Also, the first newsstands will be set up in the city and outlying areas.

Several NGOs and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) have agreed to buy bulk copies for their staff. The more people who read reliable newspapers, the better the country's chances of eradicating the inequities and poverty that are key to the social discord, says Fillmore.

With improvements so far in content and the anticipated increase in circulation, the partner papers now have the opportunity to attract more advertising.

In Sierra Leone retail advertising essentially doesn't exist. Most ads come from NGOs or the government, Fillmore explains.

CJFE will provide hands-on training for ad sales staff that will include teaching how to actively seek advertising (instead of waiting for it to come to them), how to make regular sales calls to prospective advertisers, and how to sell more than one ad at a time. If sales staff work on a performance-based system, he

adds, revenues could increase significantly.

They will also receive training in modern design techniques, because as with any publication, appearance is an integral part of a newspaper's success. Sierra Leone's papers need to be better produced and look more professional, Fillmore says. The project will address these issues by buying one high-quality laser printer to be located in the main office for the use of all five papers. Editors can bring page images to the office on disk, to be printed out via the office computer.

Finally, after successfully helping reporters with basic skills, CJFE wants to move to more advanced journalistic concepts, in particular coverage of key peace-building issues.

CJFE will work with a small number of journalists to help them report accurately and fairly on the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Fillmore believes these two initiatives, if not covered responsibly, could lead to renewed tensions in Sierra Leone.

In addition, some journalists will receive training in investigative reporting to be better prepared to report on corruption. CJFE would also like to set up a special section providing regular coverage of key peace-building issues, and help papers set up a system to obtain news reports from the provinces.

The hope is that this will foster understanding between those living in Freetown and those in the provinces, an important step towards lasting peace in Sierra Leone.

## Journalists in Exile step up organizing

By Joel Ruimy

Meet CJFE's Journalists in Exile: At home, they wrote for or edited newspapers and magazines; they hosted TV and radio programs; several wrote books. Here, they pump gas, make sandwiches in diners and occasionally work as court interpreters. Only two actually work as journalists, while several others freelance for the ethnic media.

The JEXs, as they are known, have been a part of CJFE since

2000, when this organization began offering modest support to nearly 30 journalists who fled 20 countries to move to Canada. In their native lands, being a journalist meant enduring persecution and harassment; it meant worrying about a family's safety and sleeping with one eye open.

"Modest support" has meant access to CJFE stationery, computers, photocopying and postage, along with a place to read about the latest developments in their home countries. It has also meant the occasional letter from CJFE to federal authorities endorsing a request for refugee or landed-immigrant status.

Now the JEXs are on the move. Earlier this summer, they met to organize themselves more for-

### JEX executive

**PRESIDENT:** Morteza Abdolalian (Iran)

**VICE-PRESIDENT:** Gordana Knezevic (Bosnia)

**TREASURER:** Mohammed Khaled (Sudan)

**SECRETARY:** Audace Manirakiza (Burundi)



**JEX members and Governor General Clarkson at the CJFE banquet.**

mally. They elected an executive and drafted a mission statement. They also wrote a brochure and are working on a skills inventory, a sort of catalogue of their backgrounds and credentials. If you work in a newsroom that deals with international affairs, expect to hear from them soon.

### Countries of origin

Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chad, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Serbia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan.

At the same time, they pooled stories of difficulties and indifference they encountered on landing in Canada and created a "moral support committee" to assist newcomers. They're also talking to Ryerson University about training for journalism in Canada and, for some, English as a second language.

The CBC's Joe Schlesinger, himself an early JEX, has agreed to serve on an advisory panel. Any CJFE members who want to help can get in touch with the office: call (416) 515-9622 or e-mail [cjfe@cjfe.org](mailto:cjfe@cjfe.org).



# Bullets not the only threat to Colombian journalism

By Patricia Toquica

Journalism in Colombia has become one of the most challenging and dangerous professions in this South American country. Embroiled in one of the bloodiest and longest armed conflicts anywhere, Colombia has seen increased violence in recent years between left-wing guerrillas, ultra-right paramilitary forces, drug lords and the Colombian army.

Since 1992 thousands of civilians and more than 30 journalists have been killed.

Earlier this year, Orlando Sierra, deputy director of the regional newspaper *La Patria*, was murdered while arriving at work in the city of Manizales. While official investigations into his death are ongoing, rebel armed forces were not the only ones pressuring Sierra. Powerful politicians are suspected of being involved. It is well known that Sierra was at the forefront of investigations into local corruption.

Impunity and corruption in the judicial system are principal obstacles to resolving crimes against the press. The Colombian govern-

ment claims it spent more than US\$9 million last year on a program to protect journalists. But not one of the 31 murders of journalists in the past decade has resulted in a conviction, says Enrique Santos, co-director of the daily *El Tiempo* and a member of the Inter American Press Association.

This year, more than 20 journalists have fled the country, ac-

defence programs.

However, armed conflict is not the only worry of Colombian journalists. In the last five years, a recession has resulted in an increasing number of media companies cutting back operations and merging with more powerful corporations.

In 1996, more than 10 broadcasters aired nationally televised programs; now only four remain,

**Media concentration is another impediment to press freedom in Colombia – which is considered, ironically, one of the most stable democracies in Latin America.**

According to Colombia's Foundation for Press Freedom. Last year, 11 journalists were assassinated, three kidnapped and eight fled into exile.

Reporting on the conflict is so risky for journalists and news organizations that in recent months, the biggest companies have increased their life insurance coverage for war correspondents and tightened security measures. Journalists are also being given bullet-proof vests and self-

and two of them (RCN and Caracol, owned by the two largest conglomerates in Colombia), control 82% of the advertising market.

Such media concentration is another impediment to press freedom in Colombia, a country that is ironically considered one of the most stable democracies in Latin America.

Last year, *El Espectador*, a daily newspaper with a history of more than 100 years, scaled back to weekly publication. Its owners

said they were forced to do so for financial reasons. This from a newspaper that endured bomb attacks, and the murder of its director, Guillermo Cano, during the worst years of the civil war.

Colombian journalists are concerned that opinion in national newspapers is becoming concentrated in the hands of one publication, *El Tiempo*. Its owners, the Santos family, have had close political ties to past governments and the new Alvaro Uribe administration is no different. Colombia's new vice-president, Francisco Santos, was a former newsroom chief of *El Tiempo*.

Human-rights organizations fear the growing proximity between media and government will have dangerous consequences as the civil war intensifies. They say President Uribe-Velez's promise to get tough with rebels, corruption and drug traffickers will result in even more violent retaliation from guerrilla forces.

Patricia Toquica, a Colombian journalist who covered social and economic issues for national newspapers for nine years, has recently moved to Canada. She can be contacted at [ptoquica@yahoo.ca](mailto:ptoquica@yahoo.ca)

# Hong Kong's new press freedom fraying at the edges

By Cliff Bale

On the surface, press freedom is alive and well in Hong Kong, five years after the British colony was handed back to the People's Republic of China.

There are about 60 newspapers of varying political shades, including 14 mass-circulation dailies, 700 periodicals and six broadcasters offering news services. They report on a variety of issues, from the negative economic environment to the latest political manoeuvrings in both Hong Kong and mainland China.

What this picture fails to explain is the almost imperceptible process in which reporting is being circumscribed: by warnings from mainland Chinese officials, a drumbeat from some in the government and outside not to rock the boat, and the desire of at least some media proprietors not to offend the leadership in Beijing.

Examples include calls from friends of Beijing for the government-owned, but editorially independent broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong to toe the official line. A former editor of the influential *South China Morning Post* has detailed how manage-

ment tried to force the newspaper to become less critical of the People's Republic. Indeed, several of the *Morning Post's* more critical journalists have been sacked or forced to leave; others fear for their jobs in the coming years.

The effect has been a growing caution in media coverage, particularly of issues sensitive to Beijing. These include the activities of political dissidents and advocates of independence for Taiwan and Tibet, the Falun Gong spiritual movement, labour unrest, inner workings of the Chinese leadership, and the performance of state leaders. Reporting on such issues continues, but it may come

from wire agencies, instead of through in-depth investigations by a publication's own reporters.

This trend could be exacerbated in coming years. Senior Hong Kong government officials have indicated that they will soon enact laws to ban treason, sedition, subversion against Beijing, secession and the theft of state secrets.

Critics fear that such laws could further chill the reporting of such sensitive issues as mainland Chinese dissident activities. They fear that the laws, once enacted, will lack sufficient safeguards to prevent abuse.

Not everyone agrees that press freedom is being circumscribed.

An executive member of the pro-Beijing Hong Kong Federation of Journalists, Edgar Yuen, asserts: "The free flow of information is in the hands of journalists in Hong Kong. It has nothing to do with whether business or tycoons want to have good relations with Beijing or not." And the former editor of the *South China Morning Post*, Thomas Abraham, denies that the newspaper is pulling its punches on China coverage.

But not everyone is convinced. Says prominent China reporter Jasper Becker, who was sacked by the *Morning Post*: "Under the terms of its 1997 return to Chinese rule, Hong Kong is supposed to enjoy autonomy from the rest of China under the policy of 'one country, two systems.' But the changing mentality of Hong Kong's elite – a group desperate to be seen as more Catholic than the Pope but constantly insecure about how to interpret Beijing's wishes – has created a new dynamic of self-censorship."

Cliff Bale is an executive member of the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA), and chairs its press freedom and ethics committees. He is also an author of the HKJA's annual report on freedom of expression.

(See [www.hkja.org.hk](http://www.hkja.org.hk))



Reporting in the former British colony is being circumscribed, says Cliff Bale of the Hong Kong Journalists Association.

## EN LECTURE:

# Auger refuse d'être réduit au silence

*Attentat!*  
Par Michel Auger  
Éditions Trait d'Union  
24,95 \$

Revue par Joël Ruimy

Un journaliste d'enquête qui se fait descendre à l'extérieur de son bureau par un individu qui n'aime pas ses reportages – cela s'est vu en Colombie, au Bangladesh, en Russie, au Mexique. Cela est arrivé au Canada le 13 septembre 2000. Michel Auger, lauréat en 2000 du Prix commémoratif Tara-Singh-Hayer du CJFE, raconte son histoire dans un ouvrage qui vient de paraître en anglais (mais la revue de l'ouvrage est établie sur la version originale française).

Et c'est toute une histoire : le chroniqueur judiciaire Auger, en route pour le travail par un beau mercredi matin ensoleillé, revient tout juste de vacances. Ses pensées glissent déjà vers la fin de

semaine. « J'avais prévu une semaine de travail sans stress », écrit-il.

Pas de chance. Un homme de main des motards que Auger avait dénoncés à de multiples reprises dans Le Journal de Montréal l'attend dans le stationnement du quotidien. Au moyen d'une arme munie d'un silencieux, l'assaillant tire sept coups de feu dans sa direction en moins de deux secondes; six projectiles touchent la cible.

Étonnamment, Auger reste conscient assez longtemps pour faire le 911 sur son téléphone cellulaire. Il se souvient même d'avoir échangé des blagues avec

l'assaillant, qui pourrait me reprocher de vouloir quitter ce métier? », écrit-il. « Inquiété surtout par les auteurs de l'attentat, qui devaient sûrement regretter d'avoir raté leur coup, je craignais un retour au travail, à la même vie qu'avant. »

Avec le temps, cependant, et avec l'appui de ses collègues, de sa communauté et de nombreuses organisations de défense de la liberté d'expression du monde entier, Auger est revenu en force. « Le 13 septembre 2000, des criminels avaient voulu me réduire au silence et avaient brièvement réussi. Mais mes patrons et mes collègues du Journal de Montréal

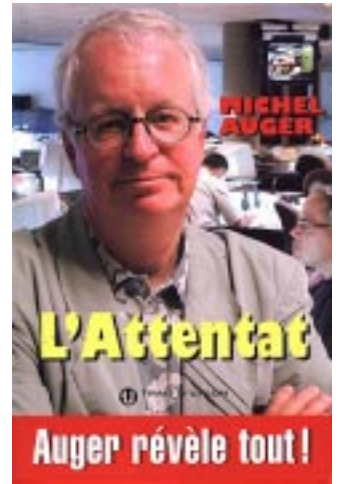
**Auger possède une connaissance encyclopédique des joueurs du monde interlope québécois et canadien.**

le médecin et les ambulanciers sur le chemin de l'hôpital. Pour Auger, toutefois, la chance a duré plus longtemps que pour les 40 journalistes d'un peu partout dans le monde, qui ont été assassinés durant les neuf premiers mois de cette année. Il a survécu et, bien qu'atteint de deux balles à la colonne vertébrale, il ne souffre d'aucune paralysie.

De son lit d'hôpital, Auger réfléchissait à l'attentat contre sa vie et se demandait s'il avait envie de continuer à courir des risques. Il a même pensé à la retraite, à 56 ans. « Après cet

attentat, qui pourrait me reprocher de vouloir quitter ce métier? [...] Les dossiers sur les motards avaient été au premier plan depuis. »

Auger est de retour à son pupitre et il a repris son titre de doyen des chroniqueurs judiciaires du Québec. Il traite longuement de la tentative d'assassinat contre lui. Mais ce n'est pas là le seul intérêt du livre. Il possède une connaissance encyclopédique des joueurs du monde interlope québécois et canadien – depuis quarante ans, il en a assuré la couverture pour La Presse, Radio-



Canada et Le Journal de Montréal. Auger décrit avec une fascinante précision comment, il y a des dizaines d'années, les familles criminelles de Montréal ont établi des ponts entre les organisations criminelles des États-Unis et d'Europe. Il connaît aussi très bien les groupes de motards qui infestent le Québec, notamment les Hell's Angels – qui n'étaient qu'objet de curiosité lorsqu'il les a rencontrés en 1967, mais qui se sont transformés en une puissance criminelle audacieuse et impitoyable.

L'ouvrage est un incontournable pour qui veut en savoir plus sur ce jour terrible de septembre 2000 et sur les criminels qui ont vécu et qui vivent parmi nous, qui ont cherché et cherchent encore à supprimer les voix qui s'élèvent contre eux.

Next issue: English edition.



JOHN DONGHUE / CJFE

## Pro-poster protest

Folk singer Billy Bragg spoke at a rally last spring at Toronto's city hall to oppose tight restrictions on posting the streets. In October, the municipality heard deputations on the proposed bylaw, which would restrict posters to city-provided 'collars' on utility poles. Below, opponents graphically express their position at [www.publicspace.ca](http://www.publicspace.ca)



ALLEN MCINNIS

## Quebec Summit in photos

Photographer and CJFE member Peter Sibbald is felled by a rubber bullet while covering protests at the April 2001 Summit of the Americas in Quebec. An exhibit Sibbald helped organize of works by 11 photographers at the summit is at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre until early November. It's dedicated to one of them, David Maltby, who died last year.