

# CJFE

## reporter

2004 – Issue 2

## “I didn’t know I had any faults”

### Workshop engages Sierra Leone journalists

by Roger Holmes

**D**arkness falls rapidly over Freetown as a small yellow taxi packed with six journalists and a driver snakes its way around the potholes heading up Signal Hill.

In the back seat, excited journalists are talking about the past week as they head back to their accommodations from the beach bar where they have been decompressing after a week of intensive training. CJFE had brought them to Freetown from the rural areas of Sierra Leone to learn how to better report on issues from the outlying provinces.

Nilmalty Kamara, from the

#### Sierra Leone handover

After four years of work on media building in Sierra Leone – including installation of a printing press, editorial training and technical support – CJFE is handing over its responsibilities to the newly created NGO Sierra Leone Media Support Group. The group will manage the printing press and aid in rebuilding the media with CJFE’s support and cooperation.

Kenema region in the Eastern Province, writes for the *Concord Times*, and talks about having his writing carefully edited.

“I learned a lot from Rowger,” he tells a colleague. “I didn’t know I had any faults.” His colleague agrees that the past week, spent on basic journalism techniques and the unique problems that rural journalists face in Sierra Leone, has been very helpful.

As part of the CJFE Sierra Leone Media project, I led an intensive five-day workshop for rural journalists in April 2004. Local government elections were held for the first time in 35 years in the country on May 22.

Kamara, along with 10 other reporters including two women, honed their writing skills, attended a sitting of Parliament and filed stories with local newspapers. They learned to differentiate between editorial comment and straight reporting, gained a better understanding of hard versus soft news, and learned how to accept criticism to improve their writing.

The reporters spoke of the difficulty in filing a story from the



ROGER HOLMES / CJFE

**Workers at the CJFE printing press operation in Sierra Leone overhaul the press that has helped improve the quality of newspapers in the African country.**

provinces. They live and work outside Freetown, where all the newspapers in the country are published. The only semi-reliable method of getting a story into print is to pay a truck driver heading into Freetown to drop it off at a paper. They don’t have computers; they write their stories out long hand on any small scrap of paper they can find. They don’t have Internet access or money.

What they do have is a burning desire to write and a desire to see their country recover from a devastating civil war.

This training is one of the final steps CJFE is taking to fulfill its mandate to help improve journalism in this war-torn country.

The project started four years ago with the installation of a printing press, in addition to edi-  
— continues on page 3

## Zimbabwe’s independent daily struggles to publish

By Bernard Simon

**F**or five years, the government of Zimbabwe has brutally and relentlessly tried to silence *The Daily News*.

The paper’s offices and printing presses have been firebombed. Police have endlessly harassed its journalists, shutting down the paper for months at a time and carting off more than 100 computers from the newsroom to Harare’s maximum-security prison. Legal fees have mounted, and a creditor has threatened to take the beleaguered paper to court.

Even ordinary Zimbabweans have been threatened with harm if they keep buying *The Daily News*.

The paper – together with a handful of others that have dared to stand up to President Robert Mugabe’s increasingly repressive rule – has done its best to soldier on. However, the government may yet get its way.

“We believe we’re in the hands of God,” says Sam Nkomo, chief executive of Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe, which owns *The Daily News*. Nkomo and the editor of the *Sunday Daily News*,

— continues on page 8



WAN / AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

**A journalist reads *The Daily News*, Zimbabwe’s only independent daily newspaper, during the December 2003 Commonwealth Summit in Nigeria.**

**Embedded in Baghdad** with Alexandre Trudeau

p 2

**CJFE and IFEX celebrate World Press Freedom Day**

p 4-5

**Cuban journalists live in fear of being jailed**

p 6

**Pakistani women struggle for human rights**

p 8

# Trudeau film night attracts full house

By Erin Pooley

**A**lexandre Trudeau leans into the microphone and ponders a question about what he learned during his six weeks in Iraq last year.

"A lot about marriage," laughs the 30-year-old filmmaker referring to the time he spent 'embedded' with a middle-class Iraqi couple and their two children last March before, during and after the U.S.-led invasion on Iraq.

Almost 350 people attended a screening of Trudeau's film, *Embedded in Baghdad*, on March 16 at the Ryerson Theatre in Toronto. The sold-out event, hosted by CJFE and the Ryerson School of Journalism, followed last year's successful screening of *War Pho-*

*tographer* about photographer James Nachtwey.

After the screening, Trudeau and CBC journalist Wendy Mesley discussed his experiences in Iraq.

The hour-long documentary, which aired on CTV's *W5* last September, follows Anmar and Layla A-Saadi in the days leading up to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and in the weeks after the devastating 'shock-and-awe' campaign that left much of the city toppled, bullet-riddled and burnt.

"All I knew was I didn't want to be in a hotel with 400 other journalists," said Trudeau.

The film's title, he said, was a deliberate 'joust' at reporters who stationed themselves with the American military for a purportedly close-up view of the war.

"I was watching the [build-up to the] war through the eyes of the media," he said, referring to the weeks spent watching TV coverage before arriving in Baghdad. "I came here for an unmediated view of war."

The film presents a powerful portrait of the A-Saadi family struggling with daily life while the city around them was ravaged by bombs and enemy fire. Despite the dangers, fear never figured too prominently for Trudeau as he journeyed into the heart of a treacherous war zone.

"Danger is a very precise little thing. Of course there's a risk of a bomb dropping on the house. But I figured that risk was low."

Amid the fear and confusion of war, Trudeau filmed several intimate moments with the A-Saadi family, including Anmar's birthday party and quiet time Layla



**Alexandre Trudeau speaks to a full house at CJFE's Toronto showing of his film *Embedded in Baghdad*. Below: CBC's Wendy Mesley interviews Trudeau about living with an Iraqi family during the war.**

PHOTOS BY ADAM KRAWESKY/INCONDUIT.COM

had with her baby daughter.

"For all the evil that was done, it was a magical time, it was a magical place," said Trudeau.

Trudeau served with the Canadian Forces before obtaining a philosophy degree at McGill University in Montreal. In 1999, he was chosen as one of seven bilingual video journalists involved in *Culture Shock/Culture Choc*, a 13-part series on CBC Newsworld and Radio-Canada's RDI.

He is an occasional foreign correspondent for *Maclean's* magazine. Although he still calls Montreal home, he has spent the past several years travelling to places like Iraq, Haiti and the West Bank to provide an unconventional glimpse into the lives of people beyond the tanks and front lines.

Trudeau admits he grew close to the A-Saadi family during his stay in Baghdad and that he often found it difficult to record their every move on camera.

"It was a movie that every day I didn't think I was making. I'm a shy filmmaker, which is not

a good quality ... filming the family often reluctantly ... all things that are not really good for a journalist or a filmmaker."

He said the family took a huge risk by letting him into their home: if they had been discovered, they could have been punished "by the harshest means." He still worries about the family, and says he's "not very optimistic about the future of Iraq."

Trudeau recently returned from the Jenin district in the West Bank where he spent a month living with a Palestinian family. He hopes to produce a documentary with the footage he collected.

Erin Pooley is a recent graduate of the two-year journalism program at Ryerson University. She has worked at the *Windsor Star* and the *Toronto Star*, and is with *The Globe and Mail* this summer for a four-month internship.

## Palestine/Israel photogs in *Mirrors of the War*

Reporters Without Borders Canada and CJFE presented Patrick Chauvel's new film *Mirrors of the War* in Toronto May 12. The film documents the lives of six photographers on opposite sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Nael Shyoukhi, a Palestinian cameraman for Reuters in the West Bank, and Miki Kratsman, a photographer for the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, spoke about the risks and challenges of working in the embattled region. Susan Ormiston of CBC's *Inside Media* hosted.

## CJFE events: Fall 2004

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

### Word on the Street

Once again, CJFE will have a booth at this year's Word on the Street festival in Toronto on September 26 at the new location at Queen's Park Circle. For information on the festival, visit [www.thewordonthestreet.ca](http://www.thewordonthestreet.ca).

OCTOBER

### Panel on free expression

CJFE is working with Lesley Sparks of World Press Photo and the Dutch Consulate in Toronto to present a roundtable discussion on freedom of expression in October 2004.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20

### CJFE annual meeting

CJFE's Annual General Meeting will be held in Toronto on Wednesday, October 20, 2004.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

### CJFE annual banquet

The 2004 Press Freedom Award Banquet will be held November 17, 2004, at Toronto's Westin Harbour Castle.

Updates will be posted on the CJFE website and in E-bulletins.



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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.

# Exile News magazine promotes West African peace and reconciliation

By Charles Jackson

Charles Jackson is the managing editor of Exile News magazine. He and his colleagues received a small grant from the Journalists in Distress Fund in February 2004.

If pushing for the limits of democracy, press freedom and basic fundamental freedoms resulted in our flight to Ghana after receiving death threats, then we beat our chests for cherishing these virtues of life. This is what happened to us – Charles Jackson, Victor Harris, LeRoy S. Nyan, A. Abbas Dulleh, Hisenburg Q. Togba and David Korvah, six staff members of the Liberian newspaper *The New Democrat* – in September 2000.

*The New Democrat* was under continuous harassment during the Charles Taylor regime because our paper reported vigorously on the excesses of the government. We sought to promote the rule of law, respect for human rights and other basic freedoms, including freedom of expression. Consequently, the government viewed our work as an attempt to undermine its authority and create instability

in the country.

Confronted with increased harassment, intimidation and physical threats by the president's security forces, we had no alternative but to flee to Ghana to save our lives. We had seen the strong-arm tactics used to silence perceived enemies, especially the independent media.

But life in Ghana was extremely difficult. After going through pre-screening exercises conducted by the UNHCR in September 2000, we were told to wait for a decision from the Ghana

Refugee Board. But it wasn't until three long years later, in September 2003, that the UNHCR and Ghana Refugee Board finally issued us refugee status.

During these years we faced great privation, as we had no means of earning a living. We survived thanks to organizations like CJFE that came to our aid and gave us a subsidy from the Journalist in Distress Fund. But all hope was not lost. When we arrived in Ghana in September 2000, we met Prof. Kwami Karikari, executive director of the Media Foundation for West Africa. Karikari was deeply worried and concerned about our plight. In July 2003, this led to an extraordinary initiative: the creation of a new paper, *Exile News* magazine, of which I am the managing editor.

*Exile News* caters to the information needs of the Liberian refugee community in Ghana, covering the ongoing peace process in Liberia. The paper's philosophy is to promote peace and reconciliation in the West Africa sub-region, especially in conflict-prone countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast and Guinea.

Since our inception, we have featured articles appealing to the Ghanaian community to open its doors to refugees, an appeal for peace and reconciliation by the chairman of the NGTL, women's

initiatives towards empowerment and poverty alleviation, projects initiated by the UNHCR, Prince Johnson's letter of reconciliation to the later president Doe's family, a story on tortured Liberian journalists, Amnesty International's letter to Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo urging him to cooperate with the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone, and an article on the establishment of the Africa Court of People and Human Rights.

*Exile News* is distributed free of charge, thanks to the Media Foundation for West Africa. The foundation's efforts are part of its support for media rehabilitation in Liberia.

Meanwhile, in keeping with our policy of covering the sub-region, *Exile News* will shortly expand to cover the Mano River Union countries – Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast – as a first step towards transforming the paper into a truly regional publication.

The magazine is published monthly in English with an editorial staff of five: four journalists and one editorial consultant. We rejoice that we have been given the opportunity to practise our profession once again.



## CJFE handing over press to Sierra Leone papers

— continued from page 1

torial training and assistance obtaining computers, scanners and cell phones. CJFE worked closely with six of the strongest papers, supplying training in business management, advertising sales and layout. Local journalist Foday Fofanah was hired to coordinate the project. He will take a leave of absence from the project while he pursues a Master's program in international journalism in Cardiff, Wales, next year.

Three years ago photojournalism training was added, when digital cameras were introduced to the papers. The cameras were well received because of their low operational costs: At a paper with a small padlock on the newsroom telephone and sheets of blank paper locked in the editor's trunk, being able to publish photos without the cost of film or prints is a huge advantage.

Last year CJFE also installed a small computer-to-plate system that resulted in significant cost and time savings over hand development of negatives and metal plate-making. This technology made the difference between a marginal printing operation and a financially stable one with a strong future.

CJFE has also strived to help the newspapers increase circulation. Most daily papers have a

circulation of no more than 1,000 copies – in a city of over one million people. Working with the newspaper sellers' association and the printing press member papers, six bicycles were purchased to expand circulation capacity.

As CJFE's mandate draws to a close, the project, including the printing press (which has just received a major overhaul), is being turned over to local control. A local board of directors has been formed from respected Sierra Leonians who recognize the vital role the media plays in helping the country return to a stable democracy. In a country where libel laws come under the criminal code and printing press operators have been thrown in jail, these people are courageous for stepping forward and accepting this responsibility.

It is hot, up to 35 degrees, as I elbow my way through the crowd of peddlers on Rawdon Street and approach narrow green doors above which a sign reads "Daily Mail". *The Daily Mail* has not published for almost 30 years.

On the main floor are the remnants of a large-scale printing plant, circa 1970. A roll-fed newspaper press sits in the cool darkness, thick with dust and rust; it will never turn a wheel again. Old hot-metal Linotypes lurk in the shadows, hunched over like



Members of the Newspaper Sellers' Association in Freetown admire their new bicycles.

burned-out hulks from the past. It is a graveyard, and I can feel the ghosts of printers past.

As I climb the stairs I hear the clattering hum of a small generator reverberating off the concrete walls as my feet crunch through broken glass fallen from the windows. The stench of urine burns my nostrils. I turn a corner. Two men sit on a bench in the dark, and the generator's sound mingles with the smell of fumes from its gas engine.

I hear a new sound, the distinctive clicky-clack of a manual typewriter. In front of me, silhouetted against a broken win-

dow a man is typing furiously on a small portable typewriter. Frank Kopsa is publisher of *The News* and he is on deadline.

I have my camera with me but I can't bear to disturb this sight by taking a picture. I pause, two, maybe three seconds, sucking in the sight, the sound and the smell. This is journalism in Africa and these are some of the hardest working, most dedicated journalists in the world. And nobody knows it.

Roger Holmes, publisher of the *Wainwright Star Chronicle in Alberta*, is a member of CJFE's board of directors.

# CJFE shines spotlight on World Press Freedom Day

By Graham F. Scott

The high windows of the Royal Ontario Museum's Canada Court let the sunshine on 200 people attending the May 3 CJFE event "Spotlight ON/Spotlight OFF" to honour World Press Freedom Day. But as they found, journalists around the world must struggle to uncover stories shrouded in darkness.

A panel of three – novelist and journalist Charlie Foran, *Globe and Mail* foreign editor Paul Knox, and documentary filmmaker and writer Sally Armstrong – was moderated by Anna-Maria Tremonti of CBC Radio's *The Current*.

"We pride ourselves in the Canadian media on shining the spotlight on events and issues around the world," began Tremonti. "It's always worth learning what goes on after the spotlight goes off."

Foran discussed his experiences in China, where he lived for five years, and Hong Kong, where he lived for three. He was in China during the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4, 1989, and in Hong Kong during the SARS crisis of 2003.

"It seems to me," he said, "that Western media reported the news without really understanding what had happened. They came, they filmed and micro-



Charlie Foran, Anna Maria Tremonti, Paul Knox and Sally Armstrong discuss the media's role on May 3, World Press Freedom Day, in Toronto.

phoned, and they went away."

Part of the problem, Foran said, is the difficulty of understanding China itself. "In the words of its greatest author, Lu Xun, [China] is an iron room from which there is no escape ... It's very difficult for outsiders who write about China."

Armstrong spoke about her travels chronicling the lives of Afghan women and girls, both before and after the Taliban fell.

"The most common question I hear about Afghanistan is 'why did you ever go there?'" she said. The answer: "This was a human rights catastrophe taking place. Why I went was to see how the

women of Afghanistan were dealing with it, but also to see how the Taliban were getting away with it."

"This had to do with the rest of the world looking the other way," she concluded. "The plight of the women of Afghanistan went into the spotlight of women readers around the world, but it didn't make it into the spotlight of world decision makers."

"The people of Afghanistan know very well what happens when the spotlight goes off — [the country] was the last crucible of the cold war. When the conflict ended, journalists fled the country like a school of minnows

and left a vacuum. As we all know, the Taliban filled that vacuum."

Paul Knox recounted his recent time in Haiti, which was racked by conflict over the winter. "It's very instructive for a Canadian to think about how little information, and how unreliable the information is, that you get in a place like that. It's common to be offered [in Haiti] a newspaper that's four or five days old, and perhaps some state-run television."

That's when it's available at all.

"The first hurdle for journalists is to have the means to report what's going on," he said. "These rights that we take for granted in a political sense are also under threat in a practical, technical sense, [because] many journalists don't have the opportunity to get their stories out to people."

Knox encouraged the audience to take a more active interest in the news they consume. "When we talk about whether the spotlight is on or off," he said, "there is a responsibility on the part of readers and listeners to make their views known and to really make responsible choices."

Graham F. Scott is a freelance writer and news editor of *The Varsity*, a University of Toronto student newspaper.

## Leaks and the RCMP:

### Do journalists know their rights?

By Mike Laanela

In the post-9/11 mediascape, what is the relationship between journalists and their sources and the law?

Following the RCMP's January 2004 raid on the home and office of Ottawa journalist Juliet O'Neill, CJFE's new Vancouver chapter marked the 20th annual Freedom to Read week with a public forum entitled "Journalists Leaks, and Our Freedom To Read." About 50

people attended the February 25 event, co-sponsored by the Vancouver Public Library and the B.C. Library Association

Media lawyer Michael Skene noted that the provisions under the Security of Information Act under which O'Neill's home was searched currently face a constitutional challenge by O'Neill and her employer, CanWest Global Communications. But, he also noted that the recent ruling in favour of a journalist's right to

protect sources involving Andrew MacIntosh of *The National Post* was being appealed by the Crown in Ontario.

Kim Bolan from the *Vancouver Sun* said the RCMP has been using unjustifiable media bans to stop information from coming out at the Air India trial. According to Bolan, the RCMP is counting on the restricted legal budgets of the media to prevent them from challenging the frequent bans. She also warned journalists to be careful not to turn into RCMP sources when they themselves undertake complex investigations such as into the bombing of Air India Flight 182.

Richard Rosenberg, vice-president of Electronic Frontier Canada ([www.efc.ca](http://www.efc.ca)), an organization dedicated to protecting charter freedoms online, warned that the federal government's proposed lawful access legislation could give the RCMP the right to monitor electronic communications without a warrant. Rosenberg said the draft law would allow the RCMP to order Internet service providers to record all email and Internet use of particular users, and to order cellular telephone com-

panies to record phone conversations without search warrants.

Charlie Campbell of *The Georgia Straight* warned that police culture may need to be completely reformed in order to fully respect and protect the rights of journalists to report freely, and the right of the public to read.

Mike Laanela is a reporter with the CBC in Vancouver.

**If you are a CJFE member interested in joining our Vancouver chapter, please contact Program Manager Julie Payne at [jpayne@cjfe.org](mailto:jpayne@cjfe.org). The chapter plans to hold free expression events and pub nights.**

### O'Neill sues RCMP

Juliet O'Neill and *Ottawa Citizen* owner CanWest Global Communications Corp. have gone to court seeking the return of O'Neill's property RCMP seized in raids on her home and office. She also seeks to make public the evidence RCMP used to obtain search warrants, which are now sealed. Various media and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association are intervenors in the case.



A large audience attended a talk on free expression at the Vancouver Public Library for Freedom to Read Week.



WAN / AFP

**Journalists and supporters demonstrate for press freedom at a rally in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo.**

## IFEX provides info hub for Press Freedom Day

**O**n May 3, IFEX joined journalists and press-freedom advocates around the world in celebrating World Press Freedom Day, a day to remember the vital role press freedom plays in fostering healthy democracies and free societies.

The IFEX website ([www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)) served as an information hub, listing IFEX members' World Press Freedom Day events and links to partners' sites, including UNESCO's. Twenty-five IFEX members organized activities in more than 20 countries, including Colombia, Nigeria, Moldova, Guatemala and Thailand.

According to Reporters Without Borders' (Reporters sans frontières) global survey, 42 journalists were killed in 2003 because of their work - the highest RSF has recorded since 1995. Another 766 journalists were arrested and at least 1,460 physically attacked or threatened.

The Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) annual list of the world's worst places to be a journalist also reflected increased dangers. It put Iraq at the top of the list, as a result of a war that has claimed the lives of 25 journalists since March 2003.

In the past few months insurgents in Iraq have systematically targeted foreigners, including journalists, and Iraqis who work for them, notes CPJ. At least six Iraqi media workers have been murdered. Armed groups have abducted at least eight journalists, though all were released.

U.S. forces also pose a threat to working journalists, says CPJ. Up to nine journalists have been killed by gunfire from American troops, while others have been detained and physically mistreated.

In celebrating May 3, IFEX members also highlighted dangers facing journalists in many countries.



WORLD ASSOCIATION OF NEWSPAPERS / AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

**A U.S. Marine searches Reuters photographer Goran Tomasevic outside a Baghdad hotel in April, 2003.**

# IFEX welcomes 8 new members

By Geoffrey Chan

**T**he International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), the world's largest network of free expression organizations, continues to grow.

At its 11th General Meeting, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in June 2004, eight new members joined, strengthening a global initiative that has become a leading force in the fight to defend and promote free expression. IFEX now has more than 60 members worldwide.

The new members are the **International Foundation for Protection of Freedom of Speech** ("Adil Soz") of Kazakhstan; **Media Rights Agenda** of Nigeria; **Centro de Reportes Informativos sobre Guatemala** (CERIGUA); **International Publishers' Association**; **Media Foundation for West Africa**; **Southeast Asian Press Alliance**; **Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance**; and the Moscow-based **Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations**.

The meeting brought together representatives of more than 80 organizations dedicated to free expression. Participants discussed pressing issues including the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), journalists' safety and the use of anti-terrorism laws to suppress free speech.

With strength in numbers, many participating organizations took the opportunity to sign joint statements calling on governments to respect freedom of expression.

## Vietnam blocks IFEX website

**T**he IFEX website has become one of the world's most widely used sources for free expression, registering well over a million page views a month. In Vietnam, however, the vast majority of Internet users don't have access to the site.

CJFE discovered this after approaching the OpenNet Initiative (ONI), a joint project of the universities of Toronto, Cambridge and Harvard, to test if any countries were blocking the IFEX site.

In early May, ONI ran four rounds of testing on 18 servers in Vietnam and found it impossible to log on to the IFEX site. The servers were all run by Vietnam's main Internet service provider, Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications (VNPT).

In a statement sent to United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, 31 organizations expressed deep concern over Tunisia's hosting of WSIS in 2005. Citing the government's poor human rights record, the organizations proposed five benchmarks for the UN and its member states to test Tunisia's commitment to freedom of expression, including guarantees that local and international media will be able to report freely from the summit and that human rights and civil society groups will be able to freely distribute and receive material from the WSIS without threats or censorship.

African organizations initiated joint statements condemning free expression violations in eight African countries and urging governments to repeal laws that criminalize expression. They noted that African governments are increasingly using laws governing "insult," criminal defamation, sedition and the like to stifle free speech and curtail open discussion of matters of public interest.

Other statements focused on individual cases, including Azeri journalist Irada Huseynova, who was invited to the IFEX meeting but could not attend because of criminal defamation charges laid against her by the mayor of Baku. Huseynova had written articles critical of the administration. A week after 22 organizations at the IFEX meeting signed a joint statement calling for the charges to be dropped, the mayor withdrew the case.

For more information about IFEX and the joint statements, visit [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)

ONI's Ron Deibert commented that "considering VNPT is the main Internet service provider in Vietnam, it is likely that the filtering of IFEX is occurring all over Vietnam and comes as a result of government directives. Vietnamese authorities apparently prefer their citizens not read the information contained on the IFEX site about freedom of expression."

On World Press Freedom Day, CJFE issued a press release urging the Vietnamese government to remove the filters.

### Links of interest:

IFEX: [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)

ONI: [www.opennetinitiative.net](http://www.opennetinitiative.net)

Report on Internet censorship in Vietnam: [www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=10227](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=10227)



MIKE LAANELA

**Independent journalist Miriam Leiva with a picture of her husband, journalist and economist Oscar Espinosa Chepe, being taken away by police in March 2003. Both worked on the underground magazine *De Cuba*. Espinosa Chepe is serving a 20-year sentence while seriously ill with a liver condition.**

## Year of living dangerously for independent journalists

By Mike Laanela

**A** year after the arrest and jailing of 26 journalists in Cuba, independent journalists continue to defy the government's attempts to muzzle free speech. But many still live in fear of being jailed for their work.

"After the repression, we had a few months where people got scared," says Jose Solis, editor of Cubanet.org, a Miami-based website that regularly publishes the work of Cuba's dissident journalists.

"After that things picked up again. I don't think Fidel [President Castro] has plans to attack the press again," says Solis. Instead, he suspects the Cuban government is trying to repair the damage to its international reputation as a result of the crackdown last spring.

Currently, Solis estimates that his organization is receiving reports from about 30 journalists working 'illegally' in Cuba, about the same number as before the crackdown. Most file by phone or by fax, occasionally by email, and are paid US\$15 for each story, although receiving payment is difficult. Solis suspects many more independent journalists are also working for other news outlets abroad.

### Writing from jail

"They are even writing from jail," he says, citing a recent report on his website from jailed journalist Victor Rolando Arroyo, condemning the government for what he terms its fear of democratic elections. Arroyo is currently serving a 26-year sentence.

Others, such as Claudia Marquez, file regularly by Internet to American newspapers like the *San Antonio Express-News*, which then syndicates her articles to other papers. Marquez was once part of the only independent news source in Cuba, an underground magazine called *De Cuba* printed on photocopiers. Despite its distribution being less than a thousand copies of two issues, nine staff members were jailed in the crackdown last year.

### 3-day round-up

On March 18, 2003, Cuban police began a three-day round-up of 75 leaders of the 'Independent' movement, a loose coalition

of democracy and human rights activists, trade unionists and journalists, all pushing for reforms. In April, the detainees were sentenced to 14 to 26 years in jail after one-day trials that Amnesty International condemned as rigged.

The Cuban government charged them with treason for their close relationship with U.S. diplomat James Cason. The United States had been supplying funding, office equipment and communications through the U.S. Interests Section, the *de facto* embassy in Havana. The controversial aid was part of a State Department program to destabilize the Castro regime, run through

## Author, JEX member awarded Hellman/Hammett grants



Author **Stephen Williams** of Ontario received a Hellman/Hammett grant, given to writers who have been victims of political persecution and are in financial need. Williams, who has written about the Ontario government's plea-bargain deal with murderer Karla Homolka, was nominated as a result of the province's unprecedented criminal and civil prosecutions against him. He faces 97 criminal charges for allegedly violating a publication ban.



JEX member **Tesfaye D. Kumsa** was also awarded a Hellman/Hammett grant due to his persecution while working as journalist in Ethiopia. In 1994 he co-founded the newspaper *Urji* and worked as a writer and editor-in-chief until arrested 1997 during a wave of arrests of journalists and political activists. His entire staff was charged with treason, and Tesfaye spent three years and eight months in jail. Released in May 2001, he fled the country, first to Kenya and then to Canada in 2002. Tesfaye also received a scholarship from York University, where he will start work on a master's in media and culture in September.

USAID. The same program provided funding for Cubanet.org.

Last fall, after she published a third edition of *De Cuba* magazine, Marquez was also detained by police and threatened with 20 years in jail. When I interviewed her on a trip last December to Havana, she was determined to publish a fourth edition. But a recent editorial in the *Express-News* said Marquez's situation had become so dangerous that she has stopped writing and she has not been replying to email. Her husband, Osvaldo Alfonso Valdes, president of the Cuban Liberal Party, is serving an 18-year sentence. Marquez may be concerned about the future of their seven year-old son.

### Risky endeavour

Marquez told me she relied on her access to the special Internet room at the U.S. Interests Section to work. But others I interviewed, such as journalist Miriam Leiva, have cut all ties to the United States and its aid, fearing more charges of treason. Recently authorities have also cracked down on illegal Internet connections in homes and offices, but Solis says some hackers "are smarter than the government."

Still, Cubanet.org and other pro-reform websites are blocked, meaning that since *De Cuba* magazine was shut down, Cuban dissidents have almost no independent news about events in their own country. Forty-five years after the revolution, free speech is still tightly watched in Cuba and the official newspapers function only as mouthpieces of the Communist Party.

In the meantime, Cubanet.org has started printing its own magazine and smuggling copies into Cuba. The next wave of dissidents is already gathering strength in the nation's many universities.

Solis says "you can't stop that because you are teaching youngsters to think. Behind Fidel are forces that want reform – thousands of people even inside the government. Fidel is going to die eventually, and they want to prepare for the changes that are going to come. He cannot destroy the civil society. The people are strong."

*Mike Laanela visited Cuba to interview journalists working in the Cuban independent press in December 2003. He is currently writing a master's thesis on De Cuba magazine at the University of British Columbia School of Journalism.*

### Links of interest:

Mike Laanela's March 17 2004 radio documentary from Havana: [www.cbc.ca/dispatches/thisseason.html](http://www.cbc.ca/dispatches/thisseason.html)

Dissident updates on Cuba: [www.cubanet.org/cubanews.html](http://www.cubanet.org/cubanews.html)

The banned magazine *De Cuba*: [www.rsrf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=7329](http://www.rsrf.org/article.php3?id_article=7329)

# New JEX president works to get mainstream jobs for exiles

By Gordana Icevka

A strong connection has to be established between Journalists in Exile (JEX) members and Canadian media. This is one of the objectives of Genc Tirana, the newly elected president of JEX.

Tirana hopes that many of his JEX colleagues will soon be working as experts in their fields. He underlines that during his mandate, JEX will work hard to see that happen, as well as to support all journalists who are seeking asylum.

JEX is a CJFE section, established in 2000, that brings together foreign journalists who have moved to Canada. Many were forced to leave their countries because of pressures exerted by their governments.

Genc Tirana is an ethnic Albanian, who moved to Toronto in 2001 with his children's future in mind, believing that Canada would be a better place for them. Genc says he misses his hometown of Tirana, the capital of Albania – a city to which he owes his surname. (His grand grandparents moved out of the capital to another city, and his family became

– “the people who come from Tirana.”)

“I miss my Albanian colleagues, the media environment, all the projects I had worked on,” says Tirana. A former competitive swimmer and long-time breast-stroke champion, he also misses the sea. “I go to the swimming pools in the neighbourhood, but they're no match for the Adriatic Sea.”

His 18-year career in the media includes being a reporter, a correspondent, editor-in-chief, project officer, researcher and communication coordinator. He has written several books on journalism, ethics and freedom of expression.

In 1985, as a fresh graduate he joined the *Union Daily* as a technical writer. In 1992, he became a correspondent for the New York-based *Illyria Daily*. He was also editor-in-chief of a daily and a weekly in Tirana.

As a political analyst, he has contributed to various international and Albanian media. He has also lectured on ethics at the University of Tirana and headed a journalism association whose principal role was to monitor human rights violations in the media. While in Albania, Tirana

collaborated with many international organizations dedicated to protecting journalists and freedom of speech.

Tirana's media work has continued in Canada. He has worked as a researcher for various CBC Television stories, with the Canadian Media Guild, and a wide range of non-profit organizations. “I try to be involved in the media life,” he says.

Many journalists who have moved to Canada are trying to do the same: to continue doing what they know best – to be media professionals.

“It is important for JEX to forge strong links with the mainstream media and make an effort to integrate JEX members into the Canadian media industry. Their knowledge and background will enable them to fit perfectly into Canada's multicultural society. All these journalists from various countries are a potential force for Canadian media. We have to find a way to convince the media owners to see that,” says Tirana.

Many foreign journalists find it hard to succeed in Canadian media. But for Tirana, there's no place for pessimism. Genc's advice to fellow foreign journalists in Canada is to explore the media world here and to live their lives. He uses his fluency in four languages (English, French, Italian and Albanian) to scour the web



ARIAN DHERI

Genc Tirana, head of JEX

for interesting cooking recipes. He also enjoys reading his favourite writers (Hemingway and Remark), and cycling with his wife.

“We have to be persistent; Canadian society is open and we'll find our place,” says Tirana. “We have to live our lives and believe. When you believe, things happen.”

Gordana Icevka is editor of *Kapital weekly (Macedonia)* and *Investigative Reporting Trainer*. She is a new member of JEX.

**Biographies of JEX members, written by JEX members, will be a regular feature in the CJFE Reporter. If you are interested in writing a profile or being profiled, email Julie Payne at [jpayne@cjfe.org](mailto:jpayne@cjfe.org).**



FRANK BAGONZA

**Haitian journalist Pierre Elisem receives medical treatment in the Dominican Republic after the Committee to Protect Journalists, aided by CJFE's Journalists in Distress Fund, raised \$20,000 to evacuate him. During the rebellion against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide last February, Elisem was shot in the back and neck and paralyzed.**

## Co-op student learns from JEX members

High school student John Dang, was at CJFE from February to June 2004 on a co-op work term. In the following, John describes working at CJFE and with Journalists in Exile (JEX). The *JEX Profile Booklet* will be published soon and distributed to major media outlets and will be available online at [www.cjfe.org](http://www.cjfe.org).

By John Dang

I am 18 years old and taking my co-op placement through a special high school program called CyberARTS. This program combines aspects of traditional and digital art with web design, three-dimensional animation and photography into a course taken from grades 9 to 12.

My major project during my time at CJFE was to coordinate the creation of the *Journalists in Exile Profile Booklet*. The purpose of this booklet is to introduce the group as a whole, but also to allow members to tell their own story and share their experiences.

The JEX Booklet Committee consists of Maryam Aghvami,

Aaron Berhane, Herculano Bumba, Nikahang Kowsar, CJFE Program Manager Julie Payne and Benjamin Santamaria.

The committee taught me a great deal about organizing, writing and editing, and the hard work of arriving at a general consensus about layout, content and the booklet's purpose. Through our work the booklet is finally becoming a reality after more than a year on the drawing board.

The JEX members I've met are incredibly nice and hard-working people, sharing with me their insight and experience from years spent as journalists and writers. (Herculano is a graphic designer, something I have always aspired to become). It has been an eye-opening experience hearing their stories about censorship and harassment.

I think every member of JEX has something to offer to enhance Canadian media, through their cultural backgrounds, political and geographical understanding of their home countries or their language abilities.

# Pakistani journalist exposes rights violations against women

By Ameera Javeria

Women in Islamic societies have long struggled to assert their rights. In recent years their predicament has gained in intensity with resurgent fundamentalism, especially in Pakistan. If you throw in occasional and egregious dictatorial rule, the equation for women becomes truly daunting.

Not only is society mired in conservative traditions; the new religio-national identity precludes any public role for women.

When I chose to be a journalist, my family opposed my decision. What they read in my decision: trouble. For, like most people in Pakistan, they believed that a woman's assertiveness does not make for peace and stability in a Pakistani household.

My first editorial in 1996, about a woman's self-immolation in front of the Governor's House in Lahore, determined the nature and course of my activism. The woman committed suicide because she was denied justice: raped, she found no one willing to believe her nightmare. The cri-

minal, a member of an influential family, brought intense pressure on her – to make her shut up.

Working for *The Frontier Post* and later *The Friday Times*, the two English-language publications that are both respected and reviled for their liberal posture, I made women's issues my speciality. In the process, I was filled with anger and frustration as I joined others in revealing the increasing violence against women.

Pakistani women are victims of an unjust social order rooted in history and tradition. Lack of awareness about their rights and abysmal education have added to women's predicament. A strong feudal elite is a major roadblock to enlightenment and democracy, while a powerful clergy rejects all notions of equality and freedom for women. Women who rebel by asserting their rightful place in society are considered immoral and often punished; many are victims of domestic violence, rape and murder.

"Surely coming home as late as 9 p.m. isn't a sign of a good woman," my aunt once remarked regarding my profession as a jour-

nalist. 'Good' women are expected to conform and not to question.

Important decisions such as obtaining higher education or seeking a gap between the birth of children are made by father or husband. Activists who condemn discrimination against women are accused of being unpatriotic, and often their exertions are perceived as serving the Western agenda.

'Good women' are also discouraged from going to police stations if victimized; a male member of their family or neighbourhood traditionally takes their plea to the police. The police simply do not respond if the claimant is a woman. And domestic violence is largely seen as 'a family issue.'

Though print media and human rights organizations pay considerable attention to the plight of women, little has changed. Lack of support from government institutions and continuing re-

sistance from the obscurantist elements have prevented women from breaking their shackles.

Above all, the so-called Hudood Laws (Islamic punishment for adultery) deter women from reporting crimes against them. Human Rights Watch estimates that up to 60 percent of women inmates in Pakistan face these nefarious Hudood Laws because of their failure to present four



Ameera Javeria

Muslim male witnesses to prove the crime of rape.

These are among the many issues I hope to explore in a book I am writing about the crimes against women in Pakistan.

Ameera Javeria, a journalist from Pakistan, was recently a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan and a Scholar at Risk (New York University). A recent arrival in Canada and a member of *Journalists in Exile*, she is working on her book project *In the Line of Fire*.

## Zimbabwe's Daily News hangs in the balance



GEOFFREY CHAN / C/JFE

Sam Nkomo and Bill Saidi visit the offices of CJFE and the IFEX Clearing House in Toronto.

— continued from page 1

Bill Saidi, visited CJFE's offices one Saturday morning in early February during a North American swing to brief media, government officials and others on their paper's plight.

*The Daily News* was started in 1999 by a group of senior journalists, some of whom had worked for government-controlled media but figured, Saidi says, that Zimbabweans wanted to read about themselves instead of "sunshine journalism" featuring President Mugabe and his ministers. Saidi spent 15 years in prison under white rule when the country was known as Rhodesia.

The paper has been harassed almost since the day its first issue hit the streets. The government closed it down last Septem-

ber, but it briefly resumed publication in January after a court ordered police to vacate its offices and stop interfering with operations.

Much of the official harassment stems from a 2002 law known as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, which tightened the Mugabe government's control over the independent press. The law makes it a crime to work as a journalist without a licence issued by the government-appointed Media and Information Commission.

*Daily News* reporters have so far refused to seek accreditation from the commission, and the Independent Journalists Association of Zimbabwe has challenged the compulsory registration system in court. Nkomo and three of

his fellow directors were to be brought to trial in June for violating the Access to Information law by publishing a newspaper without a licence.

The paper was forced to stop publication last September, resumed in January, and stopped again in February, after the High Court in Harare upheld portions of the Access to Information law.

"The purpose was to financially bankrupt us so that we would die a natural death," Nkomo says. *The Daily News's* future currently hangs in the balance. Associated Newspapers recently laid off more than two-thirds of its 250 workers.

Permanent closure of *The Daily News* would be a disaster, not just for the paper but for Zimbabweans. The weekly *Zimbabwe Independent*, another of the few re-remaining independent newspapers, said in a recent editorial that "24 years after independence, voters have never had such a limited range of views to choose from. Following the closure of *The Daily News*, there is only one daily newspaper that is not owned by the government ... Zimbabweans are not getting the volume of information they deserve for a variety of reasons, most to do with repression and control."

CJFE asked Nkomo and Saidi how Canadian journalists and other outsiders can help. They suggested that groups like the CJFE could send fact-finding mis-

sions to Zimbabwe to tell the world about conditions there. As Nkomo put it, "ordinary Zimbabweans think the international community is not doing enough. The people you intend to help want you to shout."

The two Zimbabweans also urged the Canadian media to press Ottawa to lean more heavily on the South African government to take a stronger stance against Mugabe. South African president Thabo Mbeki has so far maintained that behind-the-scenes nudging is the best way of achieving change in Zimbabwe.

"We need to keep Zimbabwe on the map," Saidi said. "If the United Nations kicked out Zimbabwe, we would say that's great."

Bernard Simon is the business correspondent in Canada for the *New York Times* and several other publications. He was previously deputy editor of *Business Day* in Johannesburg, and has visited Zimbabwe several times.

### Cartoonists group lauds Zimbabwean

Cartoonists Rights International has awarded its annual Courage in Editorial Cartooning prize to Tony Namate of Zimbabwe's *Daily News*. Namate had publicly refused to register as a journalist with the government-appointed Media and Information Commission – a criminal offence.