

# CJFE

## reporter

2000 – Issue 1

## New Canadian coalition confronts government secrecy

by Beth Asher

**W**ant to use access to information legislation to look into Ontario Power Generation, the privatized successor to Ontario Hydro? You're out of luck. The new company, still owned by the Ontario government, isn't covered by access to information legislation.

And in Newfoundland, if you want to appeal an access to information decision, your options are equally limited. The ombudsman used to handle such appeals, but

that office was abolished in 1991.

In short, Canadians' access to government information is limited. The waits are longer and fees higher than ever.

Frustrated freedom of information users gathered March 10-11 in Toronto to confront this situation. A new national coalition on freedom of information issues, Open Government Canada (OGC), was formed during the conference.

OGC has its roots in journalism. Members of the Canadian Association of Journalists invited

librarians, media lawyers, researchers, and others with common goals to join the effort to educate and advocate for greater access to information in Canada.

The conference featured speakers Nancy Monson, executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition in the United States, and Professor Alasdair Roberts of Queens University School of Policy Studies. Roberts is the author of "Limited Access: Assessing the Health of Canada's Freedom of Information Laws," a 1998 report outlining

the state of Canada's provincial and federal freedom of information legislation.

While freedom of information laws are ostensibly in place to make government information available to citizens, Roberts warns that they are threatened by government restructuring and budget cuts which "have produced growing delays in processing requests, undermining the right of timely access."

OGC will look to the experience in the U.S. of quick access

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### Impunity in Chile

**A monument in Santiago, Chile, honours victims of the 1973-89 dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet, including dozens of journalists.**

**Assassinations and disappearances were almost never reported as news at the time, and most cases have remained uninvestigated.**

**See story, page 7.**

## CAMEROUN: corruption et musellement

Par Barnabé Elouna

**L**e Cameroun est probablement le pays d'Afrique où la répression contre les journalistes est la moins connue et la plus implacable. Depuis l'amorce du processus démocratique au début des années 1990 qui a vu enfin éclore la presse indépendante – inexistante pendant plus

de 30 ans – l'arsenal juridique coercitif a été renforcé vis à vis des journalistes.

La loi sur la communication sociale promulguée en 1990, puis révisée en 1996, est un obstacle infranchissable érigé contre la liberté de la presse. L'autorité administrative se réserve le droit d'interdire la vente et la circulation de tout journal dont le con-

tenu est jugé subversif.

Au Cameroun, pays le plus corrompu du monde en 1999 d'après l'ONG Transparency International, plongé dans une catastrophe économique sans précédent du fait des détournements de fonds publics et des prévarications de toutes sortes. Le travail des journalistes est des plus risqués et des plus effrayants. Toute contesta-

tion ou toute critique à l'encontre du régime despotique de Paul Biya est sévèrement réprimée.

Soixante-dix pour cent des imprimeries, qui sont aussi les mieux équipées, sont contrôlées soit par l'État, soit par des anciens fonctionnaires enrichis par la corruption qui sont devenus hommes d'affaires. Ces imprime-

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

# Canadian government must promote free expression



KRISTINA STOCKWOOD / CJFE

By Sharmini Peries

I am heartened by the many congratulatory letters received at my office since my appointment as CJFE's executive director. I assume my new responsibilities with great enthusiasm.

I am excited by the possibilities and challenges faced by CJFE and the freedom of expression community. I enter the political and policy debates on free expression, representation and censorship informed by a background

in human rights, feminism, anti-racism, with particular emphasis on militarization, war and nationalism. In 1999, conflict and full-scale war around the world continued to be the most significant factors contributing to the ruthless repression of freedom of expression and killing of journalists.

One of CJFE's goals is to enlist the support of the Canadian government as we strive to promote freedom of expression at home and world wide. In early March, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade held preparatory consultations prior to the next session of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

CJFE president Arnold Amber, board member Bob Carty and I took the opportunity to urge the Canadian government to aggressively push for full implementation of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees us the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In fact, Canada will lead on the resolution on freedom of expression in relation to Article 19 in Geneva.

CJFE urged the Canadian government to take a strong stand,

by clearly denouncing nations with a poor record on human rights and free expression. Using IFEX statistics of attacks and killings of journalists, CJFE raised particular concerns about the former Yugoslavia (11 killed), Sri Lanka (4 killed), India (3 killed), Indonesia (8 killed), Democratic Republic of Congo (33 serious assaults) and Sierra Leone (12 killed). A preliminary review of 1999 IFEX statistics indicates that 56 journalists and media workers were reported killed worldwide, compared with 52 deaths in 1998.

CJFE also raised the issues of impunity and repressive press laws, two judicial hurdles blocking freedom of expression. Most attacks against journalists and freedom of expression have not been dealt with through judicial process. International and national courts must recognize that impunity is a violation of fundamental rights and detrimental to society. Because journalists are often change agents of social transformation, attacks against journalists are attacks against society and humanity, and must be dealt with prudently.

New press laws are being introduced in many countries, from

eastern Europe and former Soviet states and republics to Latin America, all in the spurious name of state security. In addition, many states have kept their repressive legislation from an earlier, often colonial era, that is invoked to justify media repression and censorship. Canada should urge the repeal of all such press laws.

CJFE concurred with the UN that South Africa is an appropriate host for the World Conference Against Racism, especially given that the South African Human Rights Commission issued more than 30 subpoenas requiring editors and journalists to appear at hearings on racism in the media. CJFE recommended that Canada push for a session on racism and the media at the 2001 conference.

**The full brief of CJFE's interventions at the preparatory consultations for the Human Rights Commission will be available at [www.cjfe.org](http://www.cjfe.org).**

## World Press Freedom Day 2000

May 3, 2000 will see journalists around the world recognizing the importance of a free press.

In Ottawa, the National Press Club of Canada Press Freedom Award will be presented to an individual or team of journalists who have made a significant contribution in the past 18 months by pursuing their craft under difficult circumstances, promoting or defending freedom of expression.

Ottawa celebrations will include participation by Vancouver journalist Kim Bolan, whose dedication to journalism, despite death threats against her, was highlighted in the last issue of the *Reporter*.

**Nominations are due by April 10, 2000. For more information and nomination forms, write to [satcom@netcom.ca](mailto:satcom@netcom.ca). News of other World Press Freedom Day events will be posted at [www.cjfe.org](http://www.cjfe.org).**

## Access to information 'a burning issue'

— continued from page 1

to government-held information as a model. In Canada, comparable information can sometimes take months to be made available. Government bureaucrats can take advantage of weaknesses in the law to inhibit access, which leaves members of the public and journalists equally frustrated.

It was this frustration that prompted Phinjo Gombu, a reporter with the *Toronto Star* and a CJFE board member, to initiate CJFE's involvement in the new coalition.

"Access to government information is one of the burning issues among working journalists

in Canada," says Gombu.

Gombu acknowledges that Canada, when compared to many countries around the world, en-

joys transparency of government and access to information. However he is clear that we cannot rest on our laurels.

"CJFE fights for freedom of expression around the world. In a country like Canada, the challenge is as much about making the government more fully accountable," he says.

"We have to push the limits."

Toronto media lawyer Brian McLeod Rogers has also voiced his approval of the creation of a new organization that "has a broad base of support from a variety of organizations across Canada."

"It is too easy for the government and legislatures to ignore this issue because of the lack of focused support," says McLeod Rogers.

*Beth Asher is a Toronto lawyer with a background in human rights.*

**For more information about Open Government Canada, visit [www.opengovernmentcanada.org](http://www.opengovernmentcanada.org). New organizations and individuals members are welcome.**



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**Canadian Journalists for Free Expression** (formerly the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists) is an independent, non-profit association of journalists, writers, producers, editors and publishers promoting freedom of expression.

CJFE membership costs \$25. For a tax-creditable donation of \$50 or more, the membership fee is waived.

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

# Journalists in exile form new CJFE chapter

By Gordana Knezevic

**M**ore than 15 exiled journalists, from countries as diverse as Peru, Iran, Romania, Montenegro, Sri Lanka, Ghana and Sierra Leone, are forming a new group under the CJFE umbrella to provide a voice for exiled journalists in Canada.

The idea of establishing a Journalists in Exile (JEX) chapter of CJFE arose from a *Toronto Star* series last spring that focused on the destinies of professional immigrants, including journalists, exiled from their homeland. Once resettled in Canada, very often they are also exiled from their profession. CJFE has helped bring journalists to Canada who were in danger in their home countries, and, along with other journalists who have fled, it seemed appropriate to meet to share stories and provide each other with support.

Being an exile myself, I remember a piece of advice given to me by a senior Canadian columnist during my first summer in Canada in 1996: "If you are look-

ing for a rent-paying job – don't look at journalism!"

That advice saved me a lot of TTC tickets and spared me of a lot of disappointment. It was a sincere and valuable appraisal of the job market. Three years passed before I was able to consider returning to my old profession.

Challenging that reality should be one of the first tasks of the new organization. JEX would like to facilitate access to Canadian media for exiled journalists. Most JEX members were denied freedom of expression in their home countries, and some of them have served prison terms for expressing their opinions. Once they managed to escape these oppressive regimes, different obstacles make it hard for them to re-establish their professional life and taste the freedom, previously denied them, in their adopted country.

The goal of the new group is to break the silence surrounding exiles and to make a contribution to the diversity of Canadian society. By making their stories public, the group can contribute to the current discussion on immi-



KRISTINA STOCKWOOD / CJFE

**Journalists in exile (from left): Gordana Knezevic; Zafaryab Ahmed of Pakistan, exiled in the U.S.A. and recipient of 1999 CJFE International Press Freedom Award; Adrian Dumitrescu of Romania; Mohamed Bangura of Sierra Leone; Pedro Valdez of Peru; Mori Abdolalian of Iran. In front: Isaac Ampadu of Ghana.**

gration policy, in favour of the argument that the door of any free country should always be open to newcomers.

**If you are an exiled journalist or you share the concerns of**

**the exiled, you are welcome to join JEX – a new CJFE chapter.**

*Gordana Knezevic is a Bosnian journalist who worked in Sarajevo. She is a member of the CJFE board of directors.*



**Canadians Geoff Turnbull and Ray Rideout (front, from left) sign certificates for Thai participants at the end of an eight-day radio skills course sponsored by CJFE.**

## Thai journalists learn radio savvy

Building on CJFE's experience in radio training in Indonesia, a new project in collaboration with the Thai Journalists Association (TJA) began last November.

So far, Ray Rideout and Geoff Turnbull have taught radio skills to 24 keen Thai broadcast journalists, the majority of them women. Rideout, a CBC veteran, is enthusiastic about the project.

"They're smart, they're hard-working, and they're great to work with," he says of the participants.

The Thai journalists have also been effusive in praise of the trainers. "I like the atmosphere that allows everyone to ask questions and add comments all the time, and then the trainers elaborate on the questions until everyone is satisfied," commented one

participant through an anonymous evaluation. "I like this teaching technique a lot because everyone can participate."

Thailand's government is relinquishing control over radio frequencies and opening up the media. TJA and CJFE believe that journalists must acquire skills to provide balanced and quality journalism through Thailand's most utilized medium – radio – in order for the independent media and democracy to flourish. Four Thai journalists, selected from the first round of courses, will themselves be trained as radio trainers in June, ensuring the long-term impact of the project.

The Canadian International Development Agency funds the project. CJFE and TJA hope to continue their collaboration on it for two more years.

– Lisa Roberts

## Humber students help Zimbabwe journalists

For Ray Choto and Mark Chavunduka, receiving the 1999 CJFE International Press Freedom Award had an unexpected spin-off months later.

During their trip to Toronto to receive the award last November, Choto and Chavunduka addressed Humber College journalism students. The students, spearheaded by new CJFE member Trevor Haché, went on to raise \$400 for the journalists' legal fees.

After matching that donation through the Journalists in Distress Fund, CJFE transferred \$800 to the two in March.

At their last court appearance on January 5, the magistrate remanded the case until July 7, pending the outcome of their constitutional challenge to the legislation under which they were charged.

Choto and Chavunduka were arrested, detained and tortured in January 1999 for publishing an article that chronicled an alleged coup attempt against president Robert Mugabe.





**The Institute of Modern Media in Ramallah, Palestinian Authority, headed by Palestinian journalist Daoud Kuttab, urges local journalists to use the Internet to promote free expression in the region.**

# Free expression net

By Kristina Stockword

Just one week after human rights activists and independent journalists met in Jordan to discuss promoting free expression in the region, a well-known Egyptian human rights activist found out he faces up to 15 years in jail in what CJFE and others believe is an attempt to silence him.

Hafez Abu Seada, secretary general of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR), was charged under Egypt's emergency law after accepting money from Britain for a project on legal aid for women and the disabled – money the Egyptian government says was used for other human rights reporting in violation of that country's law.

EOHR and other members of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) met with local and regional human rights organizations and journalists' associations from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) on February 3-5, 2000 in Amman, Jordan.

Their aim was to coordinate responses to free expression violations such as the recent threats to Abu Seada, and to work together on other issues affecting the independent media.

## Milestone for the region

The opportunity to get together was provided by two conferences organized by the International Press Institute (IPI) on "Media and Democracy in the Arab World" on February 3-4 and "Freedom of Expression and the Media in Jordan" on February 5.

Clearly a milestone in the region, the conferences were possible because of the openness in Jordan to free expression. The attendance of over 100 journalists and human rights activists indicates a movement in the region towards free expression and a more independent press.

Some 30 participants were invited to the closed IFEX-organized session on networking in the MENA. Jordan, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Kuwait, Yemen, Iran, Iraq and Palestine were represented,

## WRITING BETWEEN THE LINES

By Kokila Jacob

Journalists are free to live and work in many of the Middle Eastern and Arabian Gulf countries, with some notable exceptions.

Surprised?

Ah, but there is a catch. They are not free to report everything they see and believe would be a good news story. With their freedom of expression vastly curtailed, a free press as we know it does not really exist.

No, there are no government officials sitting in newspaper offices breathing down

reporters' backs, censoring stories before publication – at least not in the two Arabian Gulf countries where I lived and worked, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

But journalists and newspapers are expected to know what they can or cannot write and publish. Media is monitored and generally action is taken after an 'undesirable' story is published – the paper may be suspended temporarily with a heavy financial penalty or closed down for good, the journalist might be kicked out of the country or, in extreme cases, put behind bars.

A veteran journalist once cautioned "there are no knights in shining armor who will come riding to your rescue if you get into hot water with a story of yours – not the editor, certainly not the owners of the newspaper, and no one can even if they wish to. You are on your own, so tread carefully."

Sobering advice.

Journalists know the score. There are some subjects – for example the royalty and some government departments – which are absolutely taboo. Even the foreign press and news agencies, which

are allowed to write more freely as long as they dateline their stories Cyprus/Nicosia, often keep clear of them.

Yet reporters working for locally owned newspapers have learned to work around

the system of unofficial censorship. Stories critical of government departments, of the lifestyle of the locals, of corrupt practices within the private sector, do get written.

The style is mainly low-key, non-abrasive and non-sensationalist. Of course, in-depth exposés are out of the ques-

tion. Sensitive details may be left out, but stories are written to make readers read between the lines.

It is not easy to write with a verbal straightjacket on. It is a nerve-wracking challenge, but certainly not a boring one!

Journalist Kokila Jacob moved to Canada last year. Previously she was based in the Middle East and India, which she covered for the local and international press.



# working promoted in the Middle East and North Africa



**Sa'eda Kilani, director of the Arab Archives Institute for Research and Studies, is among women journalists in the Middle East and North Africa who are loudly calling for change.**

in some cases by exiles who had fled jail or other repression. European and North American representatives from international organizations also attended.

## Repressive media laws

IFEX members and prospective members discussed how to improve the flow of information on free expression in the MENA region and internationally. Regional efforts to promote free expression are already under way, such as the Arab Network for Democratic Development, which has 19 members across the MENA. Other groups working on regional issues include the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, the Jerusalem-based Arabic Media Internet Network ([www.amin.org](http://www.amin.org)), and the Amman-based Arab Archives Institute.

So far, though, no local group is covering the entire MENA region. A consensus was reached that IFEX should coordinate free expression activities in the re-

gion, relying on the participation of local groups and journalists.

"We need a strong presence of international free expression groups in the region, especially when there are so many repressive media laws," said the EOHR's Abu Seada. He noted that in the region, independent newspapers are confiscated and journalists are jailed for expressing their opinions, including some journalists in Tunisia who have been in prison for ten years.

He also noted that it is not always the government which targets the media: over 100 journalists had been murdered in Algeria by fundamentalists.

Algerian journalist Rabah Abdellah of the Syndicat National des Journalistes also attended. "Algeria's current media law does not allow television stations to broadcast freely, and the publishing houses are in the hands of the government," he reported.

Participants discussed efforts to document such free expression violations. The EOHR and the Amman-based Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists are working with an Egyptian author to publish a study of media laws in 19 MENA countries in English and Arabic, both in print and on the Internet.

"The region needs not a watchdog but a system of distributing information," said the Center's Fadi Al Qadi, whose nascent group is covering press freedom violations in six countries.

Timothy Balding, secretary general of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) pointed out that in cases such as that of journalist Nizar Nayouf, who is close to death in a Syrian jail, the efforts of groups in the MENA region are as important as those of international groups. Likewise, support coming from both within the country and internationally helps encourage governments who



**Khaled Abu Aker of the Jerusalem-based Internews Middle East and the Arabic Media Internet Network ([www.amin.org](http://www.amin.org)) provides an important vehicle for local journalists to be heard.**

are moving towards greater freedom, such as Morocco or Jordan. Jordan has introduced a free zone for media in what King Abdullah hopes will be a model for free expression in the region.

## Internet brings openness

The importance of promoting the free expression of women was

noted by Khadija Errebbah of the Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc. Access to communications for minorities such as the Kurdish people or Persian-speaking people in the region was also noted by participants from Iran and Iraq.

Palestinian journalist Daoud Kuttub called for journalists to be brave and take up the challenge of promoting free expression and democracy, using new technologies such as the Internet to challenge restrictions.

Dr. Raufa Hassan Al-Sharki, now exiled from Yemen, agreed. "The virtual world really helps," she said, noting that otherwise news from her country would not get out.

An informal coalition emerged from the meeting. Participants agreed to keep each other informed about violations of free expression in the region, and to develop links with other journalists and activists, particularly in countries that were not represented at the session, such as Syria, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, where some of the worst cases of media repression are occurring.

## ROYAL TREATMENT

**Meeting Queen Rania and King Abdullah II of Jordan in February provided little protection at home to Hafez Abu Seada (left), head of the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights. When he returned to Cairo, authorities laid charges against him for his human rights work that may result in 15 years of prison.**



# Canadian explores meaning of free expression in the South Pacific



A Cook Islands television journalist at a PINA workshop.

By Erin Phelan

**A** good lead – that is what sticks in my head from my year at journalism school. Leads, grammar, and how to write that heart-warming profile that gets grandmothers smiling on a Sunday morning over their toast and marmalade.

I have a wish list of what, ideally, I would have learned at j-school: how to combine cultural sensitivity with the tenets of journalism, what “development” really means, and how important freedom of expression is for democracy, even though it isn’t always straightforward.

After graduating, I applied for a Canadian government youth internship to do a media analysis

on how Asian-Pacific media covered the 1999 APEC meetings. I imagined myself in Indonesia covering protests, or in Thailand writing about the sex trade.

I never imagined living in Fiji. But who would turn it down? Beaches, tropical drinks... colourful leads.

Now, nine months after I began working with the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), my naïve image has been replaced and informed by my experience: working as a white expatriate in a cross-cultural setting where culture and tradition tempers, and sometimes limits, media freedom.

PINA is an association of print, radio and television media from 21 Pacific Island countries and territories. It was formed in the

1970s in solidarity with media institutions spread out over this vast region. The organization has been actively involved in training the region’s journalists, as well as heading up the fight for media freedom. (PINA’s Nina Ratulele is president of the International Freedom of Expression eXchange Council.)

If there are any breaches or threats to freedom of expression, PINA will issue statements that are publicized internationally through IFEX.

For example, during a period of severe unrest in the Solomon Islands last summer, the government introduced emergency restrictions. Journalists faced up to two years in prison if their reports were deemed likely to incite violence or “cause racial disharmony.”

Last November, the Prime Minister of Fiji threatened to set up a government media tribunal with powers to impose penalties on the media and to speed up the hearing of defamation cases. PINA issued international alerts through IFEX about these events.

Before coming to the Pacific, I had never thought about media freedom in relation to culture, tradition and taboos. Often the biggest threat to getting the full story comes from the journalists themselves. For example, in the

Pacific the politician a journalist interviews could be his cousin.

Though there is a civil society, *wantok* – the system based on family, community, chiefs and status – takes precedence. There are certain areas of respect that one doesn’t breach. While the Pacific media have developed enormously in the past 20 years, *wantok* still results in a occasional lack of critical questioning, and self-censorship.

Also, the repercussions of colonialism continue to affect the media. In some parts, the “white man’s way” is still revered and respected, and journalists will not question an outside “white” source – like Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy.

I attended Axworthy’s press conference in Fiji after the APEC meeting in New Zealand last September. He was cutting short a planned five-day Fiji tour due to the crisis in East Timor, and was going home to ask Parliament to commit troops to the war-torn region. He had just met with Fiji’s foreign affairs minister to discuss past and future endeavors. At the end of a 10-minute spiel, Axworthy asked the packed room if there were any questions.

Silence.

“Wow, you guys are a lot easier than my press gallery back in Ottawa,” he said.

I didn’t let that one go, and let loose with my planned questions – whether or not it was the culturally sensitive thing to do.

My work has involved writing features that are sent out to our media members – who in turn use them in their newspapers or broadcasts. I have felt like an outsider, but that makes me work a little bit harder to get the story.

In many ways I’ve felt “damned if I do, damned if I don’t”. If I get the story right, I am considered an outside journalist, possibly coming in to take someone’s job. If I get the story wrong, it seems there is a quiet feeling of satisfaction amongst some of my colleagues, that I still “don’t get the Pacific.”

The supportive work environment at PINA has allowed me to see that it doesn’t matter where I am from, but whether I know – and can write about – the issues. I have also learned that some things are taboo, and that it isn’t a question of media freedom or repression, but of respect.

*Erin Phelan is a CUSO cooperant and plans to stay another year in the South Pacific.*

**The IFEX website has a link to PINA’s extensive site about press freedom, journalism, and training in the South Pacific: [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org). Choose PINA from the list of IFEX members.**

## AOL-Time Warner merger: threat to media diversity?

by Rebecca Nelems

**O**n Jan. 10, America Online (AOL), the largest Internet service provider (ISP) in the world, announced that it was buying Time Warner, the largest media and entertainment company in the world. AOL Time Warner Inc. is now the fourth largest company in the United States, and the first fully integrated media/communications company.

With the shift away from the use of telephone lines to cable lines for Internet use, AOL’s access to Time Warner’s cable lines will give it a significant advantage over other ISPs. Meanwhile, Time Warner has gained a captive audience for its media content through AOL. As a result, the merger has prompted a flurry of discussion and debate about the merger’s implications for media diversity and Internet access.

Gerald Levin and Steve Case, the heads of AOL-Time Warner Inc., have responded to fears about the company’s control in the Internet and media fields, by stating that they intend to act in the public interest. Indeed, they are openly celebrating the revolutionary potential of the new company, with Levin venturing that such corporations should be “redefined as instruments of public service” and “may be a more efficient way to deal with society’s problems than bureaucratic governments.”

Alternative media and social justice groups fear this ‘revolution’ may have undesirable effects for the public interest, including the loss of media and

Internet service diversity.

First, these groups speculate that the merger will give an unreasonable amount of air time to one media group, as Time Warner product reaches a captive audience – AOL users – decreasing ready public access to alternative news sources.

In addition, the concerned groups include many “open access campaign” supporters, who have long fought for the continued existence of government regulatory bodies to guarantee ISPs’ access to broadband cable lines. Without this regulation, ISPs’ access to the cable lines will be determined by the market, say campaign supporters.

When at the helm of AOL, Steve Case was an active member of the “open access” campaign. Campaigners now worry they may have lost one of their biggest supporters, but are even more worried by his new company’s interest in letting the market determine access to the lines.

U.S. media watchdog Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) asserts that regardless of whether or not AOL continues its support for open access, regulatory bodies are essential to guarantee Internet and media diversity: “market forces are no guarantor of democratic, competitive media ... [The] public should not have to rely on the kindness of corporate executives to protect its access to the free flow of information.”

**This issue was covered in the *IFEX Communiqué*. To subscribe, email [communiqué@ifex.org](mailto:communiqué@ifex.org). Or search back issues at [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org).**





With photos and crucifixes, victims of the Pinochet regime are remembered publicly in Santiago, Chile.

## Chile after Pinochet: the unreported news

By Marianna Tzabiras

**O**n Sept. 11, 1973, a bloody coup deposed the socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile and ushered in the military dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet. Among the thousands of victims of the dictatorship were journalists, editorial assistants, photographers, camerapersons and other media workers who were killed, detained, disappeared, jailed, tortured, or forced into exile.

In most instances these crimes were never reported as news and, as is so common in Latin America, nearly all cases have remained uninvestigated and unprosecuted. Since *democracia entre comillas* (democracy in quotes) was reinstated in 1990, a solid wall of impunity – including an amnesty law passed by Pinochet himself – has protected the former leader and those close to him from prosecution for human rights crimes.

This wall was shaken in October 1998 with the arrest of Pinochet by British police to face torture charges in Spain. While Pinochet was eventually allowed to return to Chile in early March of 2000 due to failing health, the landmark case has established that former heads of state cannot claim diplomatic immunity.

Some hope Pinochet will face prosecution in Chile, as called for by newly elected President Ricardo Lagos. The army, however, is likely to oppose such a move, as it has all other attempts to bring high-ranking military officials to trial. It has also refused to disclose any information on the more than 3,000 death and disappearances between 1973 and 1990. The military's argument that investigat-

ing the past endangers national reconciliation is shared by many Chileans and, although not representative of popular opinion, is the predominant view in the press.

In 1996, a belief that "those who forget their past are condemned to relive it" prompted some Chilean journalists to compile information on the cases of killed or missing colleagues. With few cases brought to trial and most hardly mentioned in the Truth and National Reconciliation Commission's report, journalists used interviews with journalists' families and surviving journalists

to produce the 1998 report *Morir es la Noticia* (To Die is the News).

The cases documented include journalist Diana Arón Svigiliski, likely arrested in November 1974 by intelligence services agents and subsequently disappeared; journalist and writer Luciano Cruz Astudillo, who died in 1974 while detained in the National Stadium; and Guillermo Torres Gaona who, like many others, survived the dictatorship but was detained in prisons and concentration camps before being expelled from Chile.

The report's authors also take a critical look at the misinforma-

tion role of the media – at times under the influence of the United States' Central Intelligence Agency – in the days preceding the coup and during the dictatorship, including omissions and publication of false news. They suggest that suppression of information may have allowed the worst excesses of the Pinochet dictatorship to continue. The public was not told, for example, about jails and torture centres – one in the prior office of a newspaper – in the middle of Santiago.

A 1998 Human Rights Watch report notes that freedom of expression and access to information are still restricted in Chile to an extent unmatched by any other democratic society in the Western hemisphere. Journalists continue to face onerous laws, many of which date back to the Pinochet regime.

While prosecutions are rare, in February 2000 a journalist was sentenced to 541 days in prison for libel, and the threat of legal action leads to media self-censorship. Furthermore, two media companies control nearly all the newspapers and, as seen in the coverage of Pinochet's detention, editorials and opinion pieces reflect the conservative perspectives of the media owners rather than the diverse views suggested by public opinion polls.

**To subscribe to IFEX alerts on Chile, write to [ifex@ifex.org](mailto:ifex@ifex.org).**

**In Senegal, human rights NGOs and Chadians are using the "Pinochet precedent" to pursue Hissein Habre, former dictator of Chad (now in Senegal), who is accused of torture and crimes against humanity. See the Human Rights Watch site: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org).**

## Camerounais cherchent toujours la presse libre

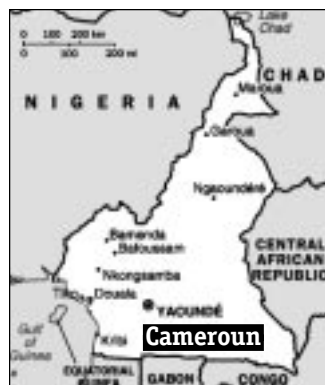
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ries refusent systématiquement d'imprimer tout journal soupçonné d'être favorable à l'opposition. La seule maison de distribution, Messapresse, filiale d'un groupe français, se plie toujours aux exigences du gouvernement en suspendant la livraison des journaux censurés ou interdits de circulation.

Très souvent, des hauts fonctionnaires mis en cause dans des scandales financiers font séquestrer et maltraiter des journalistes. Le meilleur des cas est une citation en justice où a priori les journalistes n'ont aucune chance d'être remis en liberté. Outre des peines d'emprisonnement, des éditeurs sont régulièrement frappés de lourdes amendes, sans oublier les sommes astronomiques que leur revendique arbitrairement le trésor public. Cette situation a précipité plusieurs organes de

presse à la faillite. De nombreux titres ont ainsi disparus ou réduits à des parutions sporadiques.

Ces deux dernières années, malgré les changements survenus à la tête du ministère de la com-



munication, de l'administration du territoire, de la police, et des renseignements généraux, le musellement de la presse indépendante persiste. Après la condamnation à un an de prison ferme de Pius

Njawé, directeur de publication du trihebdomadaire *le Messager*, pour avoir publié un article faisant état des inquiétudes sur la santé incertain du président Paul Biya, plusieurs journalistes ont été arrêtés puis emprisonnés pour le motif dérisoire d'«Atteinte à la sûreté de l'État», tandis que bien d'autres ont été contraints à l'exil pour échapper à la répression.

Face à toutes ces entraves, la presse indépendante camerounaise n'a pas capitulé. C'est au prix d'une extraordinaire témérité qu'elle survit stoïquement au harcèlement sans cesse croissant du régime despotique. Pour preuve, l'attente très anxieuse des populations tous les débuts de semaine de découvrir la une des journaux indépendants.

*Barnabé Elouna est un journaliste camerounais en exil qui demeure à Montréal.*

# Journalistic integrity key issue in bitter Calgary Herald strike

By Gillian Steward

Journalists at the *Calgary Herald* have been on strike since November in an attempt to gain their first collective agreement. But this strike is also a rebellion of sorts, against what the journalists see as heavy-handed attempts by management to make news stories more palatable to powerful political and business interests.

To back their case, striking journalists in Local 115-A of the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union have cited several instances where they felt pressured by the *Herald's* publisher and senior editors to be less critical of the government of Alberta Premier Ralph Klein.

Vicki Barnett, a senior environmental reporter, said she was told to put the Alberta government's point of view at the top of her stories rather than environmentalists' opinions. Other reporters said they had to cut short investigations that could have embarrassed influential politicians and business leaders. At the same time, the *Herald* entered several partnerships with commercial and community interests that also influenced news coverage.

For example, in 1996 the *Herald* and Southam put up \$250,000 towards a locally organized bid to host the 2005 World Fair. With such a vested interest in the outcome of the competition between

CHRIS WOOD



Protesters joined striking newsroom workers on Feb. 8 to complain that the *Calgary Herald* was refusing to bargain in good faith as the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union attempts to gain seniority rights in a first contract.

the two main bidders, Nagoya, Japan, and Calgary, stories that criticized the local organizing committee or the bid itself were few and far between in the *Herald*. Even when Calgary eventually lost the bid by a huge margin

of votes, the *Herald* appeared reluctant to delve too deeply into the underlying reasons.

Most of the journalists' complaints surfaced while Ken King was publisher of the *Herald*. King left the *Herald* six months before

employees went on strike and is now an executive with a Calgary land development company. He has publicly denied that he put pressure on journalists to make the news less critical. But he has also said that before he became publisher, the newspaper didn't reflect Calgary's optimistic, positive attitude.

The *Herald's* current publisher, Dan Gaynor, has said that he does not want to include a seniority clause in the collective agreement because it makes it difficult for management to hire new employees. Such clauses are standard in most newsroom collective agreements at other Southam newspapers, which have been controlled by Conrad Black's Hollinger Inc. since 1996. The union insists that without a seniority clause senior journalists could be dismissed arbitrarily simply for expressing views in their stories that are contrary to the views of management.

The two parties returned to negotiations for a few hours in early February but talks quickly broke down over the seniority clause and journalists returned to the picket line.

Gillian Steward, a Calgary-based author and journalist, was managing editor of the *Calgary Herald* from 1987 to 1990.

For the union point of view, see [www.heraldunion.com](http://www.heraldunion.com). For the company's position, see [www.calgaryherald.com/strike](http://www.calgaryherald.com/strike).

**By Chris Harbord**

The International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) has long recognized the Internet as a powerful tool to connect freedom of expression organizations worldwide. In order to harness the growing power of the Internet, IFEX launched a redesigned and expanded website last November, creating a valuable destination for anyone interested in free expression.

Like IFEX itself, the website redesign was an international effort. Ravn Webveveriet of Oslo, Norway and Tc43.net of Toronto worked jointly on the site, which is hosted by the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), the IFEX member in South Africa.

The site offers visitors instant access to the latest freedom of expression news – updated throughout the day – along with an extensive searchable archive containing thousands of IFEX alerts. To make the site more accessible, more of it can now be viewed in English, French, or Spanish at the touch of a button.

The *Communiqué*, IFEX's weekly review of freedom of expression issues, can be accessed quickly on the new site, along with previous issues you might have missed.

As well as the wealth of information available on the IFEX site, visitors can easily link to 50 IFEX members and affiliates around the world, including CJFE.

The redesigned IFEX website, as both a source of information and a co-ordination tool, embodies the IFEX mandate to "create a dynamic and truly international body" for free expression. The site can be accessed at [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org).

For those who prefer to find information in their inbox, instead of on the net, it is easy to subscribe to the *Communiqué* and to IFEX Alerts (from a country, a region, or the world). Send a request to [ifex@ifex.org](mailto:ifex@ifex.org).

Chris Harbord is a Toronto student and a volunteer intern with CJFE.