

# CCPJ reporter

Newsletter of the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists

1997 – Issue 3



## Crimes against journalists on trial

By David Cozac

In the last 10 years, approximately 170 journalists in the Americas have been killed during the course of their work. In about 90 percent of these cases, the killers remain at large.

This climate of impunity prompted the Inter American Press Association (IAPA) to launch a three-year project to investigate the unsolved murders of journalists in the Americas, concentrating on six representative cases in Colombia,

Mexico and Guatemala. The project culminated in IAPA's Unpunished Crimes Against Journalists Conference, held in Guatemala City from 30 July to 1 August 1997.

Journalists, academics, politicians and human rights activists from all over the world gathered to seek ways to alleviate the problem of impunity. They also came, as IAPA past president David Lawrence said in an opening night speech, "to insist on the necessity to respect life and everyone's freedom of the press."

The conference took the form of a court trial. Victims' relatives and IAPA investigators acted as witnesses, presenting case details to put the six murders into context and help identify those presumed responsible. Representatives of international press freedom organizations also testified on the murders of journalists worldwide.

A 40-person "Committee of Notables" acted as judge and jury, passing comment on the cases as  
— continued on back page

**TRIBUTE TO THE DEAD:**  
*Mexican folk artists memorialize nine of 170 journalists killed or disappeared in the Americas in the last decade.*

## Four win CCPJ Press Freedom Awards

The winners of the first annual CCPJ Press Freedom Awards have been announced. The CCPJ Press Freedom Awards were created to honour journalists who have conquered adversity to promote and protect freedom of expression.

The Canadian Award (of \$2,000) was given to Paul Kaihla for "Murder Mysteries," *Maclean's*

magazine, March 1997. The Canadian Award judges panel called it "a powerful and hard-to-obtain story that in both its pursuit and aftermath illustrated and defended the importance of freedom of the press."

The Student Award (of \$1,000) was given to Judy Trinh, University of Western Ontario Graduate

School of Journalism, for the video documentary "The Invisible Minority."

One of the two International Awards (of \$2,000 each) was given to the journalists of the International Communication Network Limited in Nigeria, which continues to publish their independent  
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## CCPJ reporter

Newsletter of  
the Canadian Committee  
to Protect Journalists  
1997, Issue #3 (12)

**The Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists** is an independent, non-profit association of journalists, writers, producers, editors and publishers promoting freedom of expression.

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

CCPJ 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.

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# APEC: open markets, open media?

By Frank Koller

From November 23 to 25, Vancouver will play host to leaders of the 18 countries around the Pacific Rim that comprise the economic centre of the world. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings will focus on deepening the trade and financial relations that have developed in this region over several decades.

While Pacific Rim economies have grown tremendously (and in some cases, explosively), the rapid opening of markets in developing nations has not been accompanied by a similar opening up for freedom of expression in their media. In some cases, there has been little change; some would say none.

On November 19, a few days before the official APEC meetings, the International Media and Policy Alternatives Centre (IMPAC) will host a day-long symposium for the thousands of journalists, government officials, academics and media analysts from around the world who will be attending. They will ask whether trade liberalization leads to more open media.

The symposium's goal is to analyze emerging freedom of expression issues in Pacific Rim media for governments and the private sector, and to offer policy options for change. It will also help journalists learn of the variety of working conditions they face each day.

IMPAC, a non-profit organization based in Vancouver, has been working closely with key international organizations devoted to freedom of expression, including ARTICLE 19, PEN Canada, North-South Institute, South Asia Partnership, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development and the CCPJ. I have been on the steering committee since attending a meeting in Vancouver last March.

IMPAC has received funding from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Department and the Canadian Auto Workers

union, among others. Their support will enable journalists from developing countries around the Pacific Rim to offer their insights into the relationship between trade and openness to the symposium.

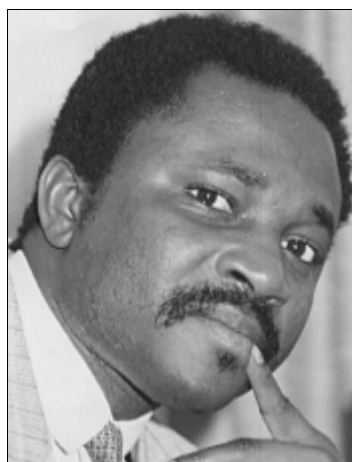
Participation will be limited to 300 people, to enable the plenary sessions and small-group discussions to develop specific policies.

The official APEC meeting will be a big media event in Canada and around the Pacific Rim this fall – for photo opportunities,

closed-door meetings and scenery. This symposium will offer an opportunity to focus on the tremendous challenges faced by journalists and others devoted to freedom of expression.

For more information, contact symposium coordinator Shauna Sylvester at: (tel.) 604-687-7408, (fax) 604-683-8536, or (e-mail) [sylvest@planeteer.com](mailto:sylvest@planeteer.com).

*Frank Koller, a producer with CBC Radio's new program This Morning, is on the CCPJ board.*



**FREEDOM FIGHTERS:** Bayo Onanuga of Nigeria (left) and Daw San San Nwe of Myanmar won CCPJ Press Freedom awards.

## CCPJ announces first winners of press freedom awards

— continued from page 1

newsweeklies *TheNews*, *Tempo* and *PMNews* despite threats, harassment, detention and imprisonment by the regime of Sani Abacha.

The other International Award went to Daw San San Nwe of Myanmar (formerly Burma), a thorn in the side of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) that has ruled the country since 1988 despite being defeated by Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) in the 1990 election. San San Nwe is serving a 10-year sentence for "distributing false news." The piece in question was a magazine article about the slaughter of thousands of pro-democracy activists in 1988.

The awards will be presented at a fundraising banquet to be held in March 1998 in Toronto. Details will be announced to CCPJ members when they become available.

## Member news

**Michael McIvor**, a television and radio reporter with the CBC for two decades, has been named visiting professor at the University of Regina's School of Journalism and Communications for 1997/98.

**Arnold Amber**, a CBC-TV producer who is president of the CCPJ board of directors, has been re-elected as director of The Newspaper Guild Canada/CWA.

# U.S. radio censors Death Row journalist

By Doug Watt

Mumia Abu-Jamal, perhaps the most-famous death row inmate in the United States, finds himself the victim of persecution by censorship.

On February 24, 1997, WRTI-FM at Temple University in Philadelphia cancelled its contract with the Pacifica Network for the *Democracy Now* program just moments before it was about to air. The show featured the first of a dozen scheduled commentaries from jail by Abu-Jamal, a black activist and award-winning radio journalist.

*Democracy Now* co-host Juan Gonzales says the decision knocked the program off 12 affiliate stations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Steve Geiman of the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) called the move to cancel the show "clearly an act of censorship." The commentaries did air on about 60 other U.S. stations linked to Pacifica, although they have yet to be heard in Pennsylvania.

This isn't the first time Abu-Jamal's radio commentaries have caused controversy. In 1994, The U.S. National Public Radio (NPR) network cancelled the scheduled

airing of 10 readings by Abu-Jamal. According to the publication *Index On Censorship*, the programs remain under lock and key, with NPR refusing either to air them or release them. In March 1996, Abu-Jamal and the Prison Radio Project launched a lawsuit in an effort to compel NPR to release the commentaries; a hearing date has yet to be set.

In October last year, the Prison Radio Project – on assignment from *Index On Censorship* – visited Abu-Jamal in prison to tape the commentaries that would eventually air on *Democracy Now*. Ten days later, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections banned journalists from audio recording, videotaping, or photographing any inmate in a state facility. Inmates have dubbed this the "Mumia rule."

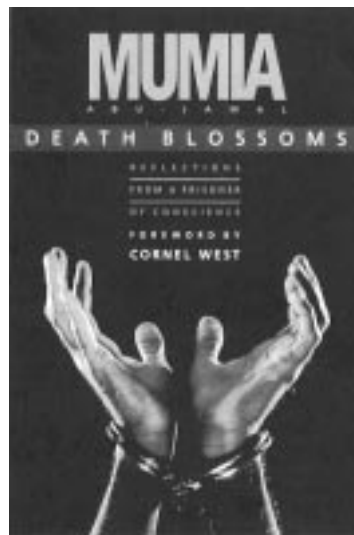
Peter Sussman of the SPJ says "If prisoners are not allowed to speak through the media, then we the public are not allowed to hear them." According to the SPJ, seven states – Pennsylvania, California, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Rhode Island and Virginia – have restricted media access to inmates in recent years.

Abu-Jamal has been on death row since July 3, 1982, after being found guilty in the shooting death of police officer Daniel Faulkner in Philadelphia in August 1981. According to Human Rights Watch, there are "serious questions about the fairness of the trial, particularly the reliance during the sentencing phase on information about Abu-Jamal's political associations and beliefs."

Two years ago, under pressure from activists, plans to execute Abu-Jamal were suspended, although he remains under a death sentence. Court proceedings in the case continue in Philadelphia after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ordered Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the original trial, to hear the testimony of Pamela Jenkins, a key government witness who now claims she was paid to

*Mumia: the Panther beret, the thinking dreadlocks, sharing meals with people named Africa, singing out their names even after the police bombardment that charred their black bodies. So the governor has signed the death warrant. The executioner's needle would flush the poison down into Mumia's writing hand so the fingers curl like a burned spider; his calm questioning mouth would grow numb, and everywhere radios sputter to silence, in his memory.*

From a poem by PEN/Revson Fellowship winner Martin Espada that he was prohibited from reading on the U.S. National Public Radio last spring.



**PERSONA NON GRATA:**  
**In 1994, the U.S. National Public Radio (NPR) cancelled the scheduled airing of 10 readings by Abu-Jamal. According to Index On Censorship, the programs remain under lock and key. But two books of prison writings have been published.**

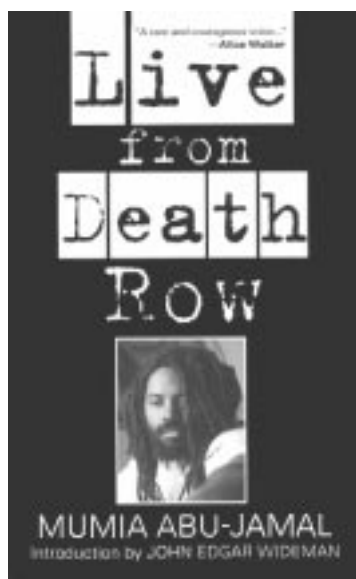
give false evidence against Abu-Jamal.

Sabo's findings against Abu-Jamal have been forwarded to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which will rule on a possible retrial.

In 1995, Human Rights Watch gave Mumia Abu-Jamal a grant from the estates of Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammett. The Hellman/Hammett grants are awarded annually to writers who have been the target of political persecution.

Abu-Jamal has also won a prestigious Peabody award for journalism and was president of the Philadelphia chapter of the National Black Journalists Association. He is the author of two books, *Live From Death Row* and *Death Blossoms*, from his prison writings.

Doug Watt is a journalist with *Canadian Press/Broadcast News*.



## Smuggled letter dispels illusions

# Iranian government plays disappear



COURTESY OF FARIDEH SARKOOHI

**BEFORE THE STORM:** Faraj and Fariden Sarkoohi in happier days before their nightmare began.

by Samuel Godfrey

When Farideh Sarkoohi, the wife of imprisoned Iranian writer Faraj Sarkoohi, spoke at a Toronto press conference in late July, the mix of courage and desperation in her pleas added a chapter to an already tragic and bewildering story.

Fearing that her husband may be killed at any time, Farideh Sarkoohi embarked on an 11th-hour press tour to pressure Western governments to get more involved. "If Faraj is still alive it is only due to these international pressures," she said at the press conference, sponsored by the CCPJ and PEN Canada.

The story likely begins with a 1994 open *Declaration by 134 Iranian Writers* calling for an end to literary censorship in Iran. Faraj Sarkoohi, then editor-in-chief of the monthly literary magazine *Adineh*, was a key organizer and signatory of the declaration. According to Iranian writer and poet Reza Baraheni, another key organizer, who is now living in exile in Toronto, the Iranian authorities retaliated swiftly.

"We had been called 'cafe-dwelling guerrillas' a few years earlier ... and now we were bombarded by the government press as spies. The government broadcast a prime-time television show called *The Identity* in which all [the declaration's organizers] were called traitors," said Baraheni.

When Sarkoohi, Baraheni and the other principal organizers refused to be silenced, the Iranian regime intensified its repression. Three other signatories soon turned up dead under mysterious circumstances. There was an assassination attempt against Sarkoohi and 20 other journalists in August 1996. After narrowly escaping several abductors, Baraheni fled the country.

Then, last November, Sarkoohi disappeared.

The Iranian government stated he had traveled to Germany. Sarkoohi had in fact gone to the Tehran airport to fly to Hamburg directly before his disappearance, and his name appeared to be on the airline's departure list.

German officials, however, denied he arrived. Moreover, reliable sources reported that an Iranian official had been spotted "accompanying" Sarkoohi at the airport. Farideh Sarkoohi and international observers accused the Iranian government of abducting Faraj Sarkoohi.

In December Sarkoohi suddenly reappeared at the Tehran airport, and at a press conference attended by international media confirmed the government's story that he had been in Germany. He also said he met with Iranian officials in Cologne earlier in December, and that they had assured him he could return to Iran without fear of arrest.

Sarkoohi appeared to enjoy freedom of movement in Iran for a few weeks after the press conference, but in January 1997 – without apparent reason – he was arrested. He has not been seen since.

Between the press conference and this arrest, Sarkoohi secretly penned a letter and had it smuggled out of the country. Released by his brother in Sweden shortly after the January arrest, this letter ended the mystery of his disappearance. Sarkoohi did not leave the Tehran airport in a plane bound for Germany; instead, he was blindfolded by Iranian authorities and taken to prison.

"There," Sarkoohi wrote in his letter, "I was shown various documents, and I was able to see that my picture had been torn out of my passport and replaced by a photo of another person ... I saw that my passport contained an entry stamp from Hamburg airport.

"From the very first day they told me: 'You have been reported missing. It has been made known that you have left the country .... You will be kept here in isolation and when the interrogations, the interviews and our inquiries are over, we are going to kill you and bury your body in secret ....'

### KAFKA IN IRAN?

**'You have been reported missing ... You have left the country .... When the interrogations, the interviews and our inquiries are over, we are going to kill you and bury your body in secret ....'**



AMINER / CARTOONISTS AND WRITERS SYNDICATE

# ing game with dissident writer

“First they tormented me until I broke down, then under extreme pressure I was forced to learn lots of prepared text by heart.”

Clearly, Sarkoohi’s press conference statements were made under duress, as were all the others, including videotaped confessions released later that showed him confessing to espionage and adultery – crimes punishable by death in Iran.

Sarkoohi’s letter reveals a complicated, two-part scheme by the Iranian Ministry of Information. First, Iranian authorities attempted to make it appear as if Sarkoohi had disappeared in Germany in order to mistreat and kill him in Iran without drawing international attention. Second, Iranian authorities tried to set Sarkoohi up as a German spy in order to undermine accusations from Bonn that Iran was implicated in terrorist activities in Germany.

Sarkoohi’s letter generated renewed international condemnation of Iran and an outpouring of concern for his welfare. Last February, the Iranian government finally admitted that Sarkoohi had not disappeared, but had been imprisoned.

Since Sarkoohi’s re-arrest and the publication of his letter in January, he has been kept virtually incommunicado. In early July rumours circulated around Tehran that he had been tried and sentenced to death. “He may have been given a trial and if so it would almost certainly have run afoul of international standards,” said CCPJ Executive Director Wayne Sharpe.

In July, four different UN Special Rapporteurs made an urgent appeal on behalf of Sarkoohi to Iran’s delegation in Geneva and to the Iranian representative to the UN.

Nevertheless, as with other appeals on behalf of victims of human rights violations, the Iranian government has responded to appeals for Sarkoohi’s release with a deafening silence, even refusing to tell Sarkoohi’s wife and children if he is still alive.

More coverage of Sarkoohi’s case – including the complete text of his secret letter – is in a new section of the CCPJ web site ([www.web.net/ccpj/](http://www.web.net/ccpj/)). Click on the “Breaking News” icon and then on the “Recent Actions” link.

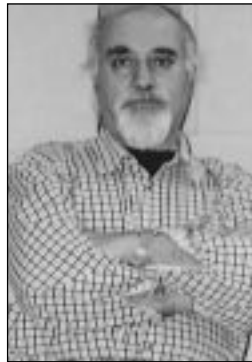
*Samuel Godfrey is a law student who interned at the CCPJ this summer.*

## PRESSURE GIVES HOPE:

**“If Faraj is still alive, it is only due to international pressures.”**

## Exiled Iranian poet asks Canada for help

*In the struggle for freedom of expression in Iran, one of Sarkoohi’s brothers in arms is Professor Reza Baraheni, one of Iran’s most renowned poets and writers. Now exiled in Toronto, Baraheni worked alongside Sarkoohi as one of the eight key organizers of the Declaration by 134 Iranian Writers. Articulate and passionate, Baraheni is fighting tenaciously for Sarkoohi’s release and for freedom of expression in Iran. In an interview with the CCPJ, Baraheni spoke of the value of Western demands for human rights in Iran and the relationship between human rights and trade.*



SAMUEL GODFREY / CCPJ

**REZA BARAHENI,**  
declaration organizer

**CCPJ:** Despite all the letters and appeals, Sarkoohi is still held incommunicado in prison, and is in grave danger. Is there any reason to think our work on behalf of Sarkoohi and others like him is having a positive effect?

**RB:** Yes. International pressure can make Iranian authorities think twice before people are killed, it can make them provide some sort of legality. Under no law – even Islamic law – can you hold someone for so long and torture him. [The case of] Faraj is an example of the Iranian authorities bending under pressure. If this international pressure had not taken place, he would have been killed .... Left to themselves, the Iranian government would simply get rid of the independent voices.

**CCPJ:** Are there other examples of positive developments in Iran?

**RB:** Democracy is another example. Even the *government* papers are talking about democracy. The idea is becoming important. The Writers’ Association [of Iran] ... and the case of Faraj has been instrumental in bringing the idea of freedom of expression to the fore. It is on the basis of these struggles that Mohamed Khatemi has become president. The choice of Khatemi is bending to the pressure of the world. [The Iranian authorities] are in a very oblique way adapting themselves to the needs of international relations.

**CCPJ:** The [Canadian] Liberal government’s tag line is that trade brings contact and dialogue, and with these connections we can best communicate the value of human rights. Do you agree?

**RB:** I don’t think the idea of constructive engagement has worked. We have economic ties but we do not have an open discussion of human rights. What is the good of all these economic ties if you don’t pay attention to the ideas of human dignity? All of the discussion comes from the [Western] press and human rights organizations. They are the ones that can force governments to take action. But, the [Canadian] Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs should speak out, they should openly say that they want Sarkoohi released – they have not done this!

— S.G.

**CALL FOR ACTION:**  
**Canadian authorities “should speak out; they should openly say that they want Sarkoohi released.”**

**DARING  
STORIES:**  
Foreign jour-  
nalists in  
Vietnam were  
perplexed  
by Adam  
Schwarz's  
scathing  
articles, sup-  
ported by high-  
level contacts.



DAVID CASE

## Fear haunts journalists in Vietnam

By David Case

"It was very strange. When we came out of the restaurant, the normally bustling street was completely abandoned. The guards who watch the restaurant were gone. I noticed that the side-view mirror of my car was smashed. Suddenly, six policemen emerged, two with machine guns."

The journalist telling the story speculated that the incident was related to his work. Earlier that week, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had chastised him for covering a riot in a village where the government was commandeering

farmland for a foreign investment project.

"The police seemed to know who we were," he concluded. "But they may have just assumed that, as a Vietnamese woman with a white man, my friend was a prostitute, and that we'd cough up money to stay out of trouble."

Whether or not the incidents were related is irrelevant. Fear was established, and fear effectively manipulates the behaviour of people, particularly journalists, in Vietnam.

In contrast to Cambodia, where journalists are victims of violence, or Burma, where foreign correspondents are restricted and the local media prints laughable trash that no one believes, Vietnam has a media that appears free but can still be manipulated, largely by fear. The government realizes that foreign news agencies bring credibility that attracts desperately needed Western capital, and are valuable during international crises, such as when territorial disputes with China heated up in March.

### Corruption plague

The domestic media has unleashed a campaign against the rampant corruption that plagues Vietnam. Exposés of crooked state executives, some of whom face execution, also instill fear in citi-

zens. Since Vietnamese increasingly believe the press is free, the government has a new, more credible proxy to do its dirty work.

But the press knows its limits. Executives who deal with senior officials confide that corruption reaches top levels of government. But reporting this would jeopardize business licences and visas, a harrowing prospect for journalists who have spent years cultivating the skills and knowledge essential to good reporting.

Last year, foreign journalists in Vietnam were perplexed by Adam Schwarz's scathing articles, supported by high-level contacts, in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. Inside Vietnam, the articles were nearly always spray-painted over or torn out of the magazines.

"Why was he allowed to stay?" we wondered. At the end of the year, his visa renewal was denied.

Difficulties in finding sources severely obscures what the world learns about Vietnam. Due to pervasive fear, well-informed people often refused interviews, or spoke off the record. For the bold few who agreed to be quoted, no journalist with a conscience could avoid being vexed by the implications of what s/he wrote.

### Reliable source

Among the press corps' most reliable sources was Nguyen Trung Truc, an Australian-Vietnamese who ran Peregrine Capital Vietnam, an investment firm, located in a beautiful villa in the centre of Saigon. Truc and his collection of antique cars were featured in *Smithsonian Magazine*, and he was widely quoted by visiting journalists.

Truc successfully conducted business "the Asian way" while others wallowed in bureaucracy. Thanks to his connections, he was considered invincible. But last year, Truc was arrested and later thrown in prison, charged with illegal business practices. The charges sent a chill through the nascent business community.

Truc's crimes were, more or less, standard business practice: so much is illegal or corrupt that it is difficult not to work around the system. Observers agreed that Truc

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DAVID CASE

LOOKING FORWARD: A billboard in Ho Chi Minh City is optimistic about Vietnam's future – economically.

# Presse moldave: question de survie



ISABELLE PATENAUDE / CCPJ

**RELEVER LE DÉFI:** Victoria Iova (gauche) et Angela Sirbu du Centre de journalisme indépendant à Chisinau en Moldavie.

par Isabelle Patenaude

Assise dans le petit avion qui m'a emmené en janvier de Budapest à Chisinau, la capitale de la Moldavie, j'ai constaté que la demi-douzaine de passagers étaient tous à la découverte de ce petit état, indépendant de l'URSS depuis 1991 et enfermé dans les terres entre la Russie, la Roumanie et l'Ukraine. Le représentant de Coca-Cola muté aux installations de la compagnie à Chisinau, le banquier américain qui se plaint qu'en Moldavie on ne puisse pas acheter plus qu'un certain montant de devise par jour, le courtier en valeurs immobilières qui dévore un rapport intitulé *Moldova: Emerging Market* .... Tous à la découverte – mais

chacun à sa manière.

Dans ce tout petit pays, on retrouve un nombre étonnant de publications. Selon l'Institut européen de la communication (EIM), environ 170 publications sont enregistrées en Moldavie. À peu près un tiers paraîtraient régulièrement. Il y a dix radios, une agence de presse étatique et huit agences privées (dont une dans la république auto-proclamée de Transnistrie). La télévision est dominée par le canal de l'état, et par les télévisions russe, ukrainienne et roumaine. Il y a une chaîne privée qui est plus ou moins indépendante.

Selon Fidel Galaicu du Comité pour la liberté de la presse, un ONG fondé en 1995, les principales entraves à la liberté de la presse

sont dues à l'imperfection du cadre législatif. Même si la Constitution et certaines lois garantissent la liberté d'expression, des provisions des codes civil et pénal, et en particulier celles de la loi sur la presse adoptée en octobre 1995, sont contradictoires ou vagues.

«On peut les interpréter comme on veut», dit Galaicu. Et, on peut s'en servir pour bâillonner les médias, qui ont tendance à s'auto-censurer.

On peut quand même constater que les médias moldaves jouissent d'une liberté relative. Cependant, trouver les moyens pour survivre et pour assurer le développement d'une presse privée vraiment indépendante, c'est autre chose. Plusieurs médias privés se disent indépendants, mais peu d'entre eux méritent cette distinction. Dans tout cela, c'est la rentabilité de la presse privée qui est le grand problème.

Peu de publications moldaves attirent des publicités, et aucune n'en vit. Selon le Centre de journalisme indépendant (CIJ) à Chisinau, les recettes publicitaires du journal le plus populaire en Moldavie représentent environ dix pour cent de son budget. Pour d'autres, c'est pire, dit le CIJ.

Le résultat : les médias sont en grande partie à la merci de commanditaires – gouvernement, autorités locales, partis politiques ou autres. Avec les publi-reportages non-identifiés qui, selon le EIM, ne sont pas rares, le journalisme et la publicité se confondent souvent. La plupart des médias sont politisés, et, avec ce besoin de garder son sponsor, les médias indépendants ont peine à survivre. Par exemple, selon l'agence de presse indépendante BASA-Press, celle-ci ne pourrait pas survivre si ce n'était des médias internationaux qui s'y abonnent.

Il faudra trouver les moyens de vaincre cette situation pour qu'une presse vraiment indépendante ait la chance de se développer en Moldavie.

## PRESSE INDÉPENDANTE?

**Plusieurs médias privés se disent indépendants, mais peu d'entre eux méritent cette distinction.**



LA MOLDAVIE

## 'Whole world is watching Vietnam'

— from previous page

was arrested for talking too much.

The tension journalists face is part of Vietnam's transition, part of a process that will effect long-term change. Moreover, the tension is mutual, as illustrated by the words of an elderly intellectual I met in Saigon who had dedicated his life to Communism: "Before the foreigners came back to Vietnam, we were free to suppress

any threat to the party. Now, every time we do anything we feel as if the whole world is watching."

NOTE: Some identities and events in this article have been disguised to protect people.

David Case recently moved back to the U.S. from Vietnam, where he was working "outside the law" as a foreign correspondent. His e-mail address is 105206.404@compuserve.com



## Declaration of Repudiation

# Impunity conference calls for justice

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they were analyzed. Committee members included Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, former president of Nicaragua.

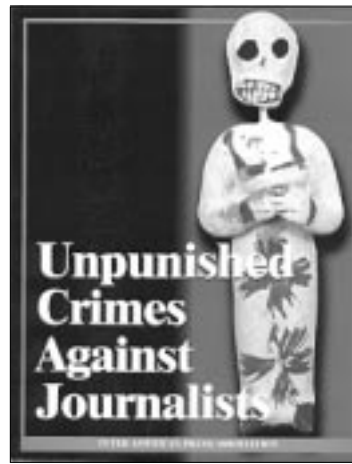
The six cases selected by IAPA ranged from the prominent – such as *El Espectador* publisher Guillermo Cano, gunned down in 1986 in Bogota, Colombia – to the less well-known, like Victor Manuel Oropeza, a *Diario de Juárez* columnist stabbed in his office in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, in 1991. Linking these and the other four cases, says IAPA, are irregularities in the investigation of the murders, ranging from cover-ups and bribes to violence against witnesses, judges and victims' relatives.

In presenting testimony about the 1993 murder in Guatemala of *El Gráfico* publisher Jorge Carpio Nicolle, his widow, Marta de Carpio, questioned the claim by the administration at the time that “common criminals” carried out his murder.

If that were so, de Carpio asked, “Why were the results of the autopsies lost? Why were the files burned? Why were I and my fam-

### NO SPECIAL TREATMENT:

*“If there can be no justice for the brother of the President of Guatemala, then what hope does the ordinary individual have?”*



An IAPA report features case studies of six journalists.

ily threatened? Why was the chief of police in El Quiche [where Carpio was murdered] in charge of the case shot to death with two bullets in the back and one in the mouth to make it look like a warning for others to keep quiet?”

The “farce” that de Carpio called the whole investigation was put into sobering context when she quoted Monica Pinto, United Nations independent human rights investigator on Guatemala, who said, “If there can be no justice for the brother of the President of Guatemala (at the time Ramiro de León Carpio), then what hope does the ordinary individual have?”

IAPA's summary of the results

of its investigations stated that all six cases had been formally assigned to the docket of the Inter American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (OAS), and that government officials from all three countries concerned had either given assurances or made arrangements that these cases would be investigated in a more serious and thorough manner.

IAPA also reported that the mastermind of the murder of Guillermo Cano was jailed after nearly 10 years as a fugitive.

The conference achieved three main objectives:

- A Declaration of Repudiation sets down the internationally recognized right to freedom of expression, and denounces crimes against journalists and the culture of impunity that surrounds them.

- Recommendations were drawn up and approved calling on governments to ensure due process in the investigations of crimes against journalists and the punishment of those responsible.

- Representatives of IAPA and several other press freedom organizations, including the CCPJ, wrote and approved a coordinated Institutional Action Plan consisting of ways to encourage investigation of crimes against journalists as well as protection and promotion of press freedom worldwide.



PRENSA LIBRE

PRESSING CONCERN: Julio Mendizábal, president of the Guatemalan Journalists Association, talks with Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchú.

## McAuliffe speaks on Somalia Inquiry at CCPJ's annual meeting Sept. 17

CBC Radio reporter Michael McAuliffe will be keynote speaker at the 1997 annual general meeting of the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists.

Instrumental in exposing the events that led to the Somalia Inquiry, McAuliffe covered the inquiry into Canada's military citadel from beginning to end. Despite its initial promise, McAuliffe fears the inquiry has dealt a death blow to access to information, and that it may be Canada's last public inquiry.

**7:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 17, 1997  
Metro Hall, 27th Floor, 55 John St., Toronto**

*Light refreshments will be served.*

For more information and to RSVP, contact the CCPJ office.